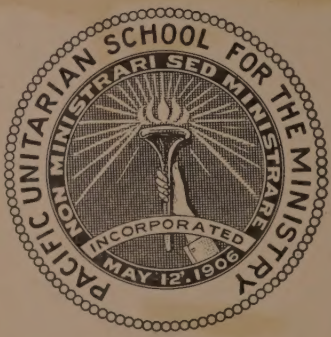
CHANGE

J. O. FRANCIS



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1891-1924

A STUDENT OF THIS SCHOOL

PRICE 1/0

CHANGE

The first Edition of this play was published by the Old Students' Association of the University College, Aberystwyth, 1913.

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E.P.C. Welsh Drama Series, No. 13.

CHANGE

A Glamorgan Play
in four Acts

By
J. O. FRANCIS
Author of "The Poacher," "The Bakehouse," etc.

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CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY.

John Price	-	An old Collier.
Gwen	-	His Wife.
John Henry, Lewis, Gwilym	-	Their three Sons.
Sam Thatcher	-	Their lodger.
Lizzie Ann	-	A poor relation
Isaac Pugh.		
Twm Powell.		
Dai Matthews.		
Jinnie Pugh.		

Time: The Present.

The action of the Play takes place in the living-room of the Prices' Cottage on the Twmp, Aberpandy.

Act I. *A Thursday Afternoon.*
Act II. *Sunday Evening.*
Act III. *Monday Morning.*
Act IV. *Afternoon of a day five weeks later.*

18132

Presented by the Incorporated Stage Society at the Haymarket Theatre, December 7, 8, and 9, 1913, with the following cast:—

John Price	Harding Thomas
Gwen	Lilian Mason
John Henry Price	John Howell
Lewis Price	R. A. Hopkins
Gwilym Price	Harold West
Sam Thatcher	Frank Ridley
Lizzie Ann	Eleanor Daniels
Isaac Pugh	Tom Owen
Twm Powell	William Hopkins
Dai Matthews	Gareth Hughes
Jinnie Pugh	Doris Owen

Play produced by Tom Owen.

Presented by the Welsh National Drama Company at the New Theatre, Cardiff, on May 11, 1914, *with the following cast:—*

John Price	David Morgan
Gwen	Rhuamah Rhys
John Henry Price	David Hughes
Lewis Price	T. Costello Williams
Gwilym Price	Tanad Powell
Sam Thatcher	Gwilym Phillips
Lizzie Ann	Janet Evans
Isaac Pugh	Phil John
Twm Powell	G. Jones
Dai Matthews	E. Ponto James
Jinnie Pugh	Bettie Wyn

Play produced by Ted Hopkins.

Ar arferion Cymru gynt
Newid ddaeth o rod i rod ;
Mae cenhedlaeth wedi mynd,
A chenhedlaeth wedi dod.

Ceiriog.

CHANGE.

ACT I.

SCENE: *Living-room of the Prices' Cottage on the Twmp, Aberpandy.*

The walls are covered with paper, bold in design, but now rather faded. On the left (looking from stage to audience) there is, in the back wall, a door leading to the road, and, in the middle of the wall, a window with simple curtains and a plain holland blind. Through the window is seen a rough wall. On the right, in the middle of the wall, is an old-fashioned fire-place. The fire has not been lit, and there is a cheap paper screen before the bars. On the mantelpiece above are brass candlesticks, clock, flat-irons, tin tea-canisters, etc. In the corner, up stage from fire-place, is a door leading to the back-kitchen, and thence to the little garden. On the same side, down stage on the other side of the fire-place, is another door leading to the parlour. The furniture is humbly serviceable and has seen long usage. At the back, in a central position, stands an old dresser

hung with jugs and set with plates. A simple vase filled with sweet peas is on the second shelf. On the lowest shelf stands a row of well-worn books, and two small book-shelves, well stocked, hang one on each side of the dresser. There are five ordinary kitchen chairs, usually arranged in the following way—one a little down stage from the window, one near the parlour door, one near the kitchen door, and one on each side of the dresser. There is also a high-backed wooden arm-chair. In the middle of the room stands an old-fashioned round table, covered with a faded red cloth. At the back, one on each side of the dresser, are pictures of Gladstone and C. H. Spurgeon. In other places are pictures of Henry Richard and some of the well-known preachers.

When the curtain rises, JOHN PRICE *is seated to the right of table in the arm-chair;* GWEN, *to the left in the chair drawn up from the window.*

PRICE *is a rugged, hard-visaged man about sixty years old. He has the collier's usual pallor, and there is a blue mark, caused by coal dust, prominent on his cheek-bone. A ragged rim of grey-white beard runs, below his chin, from ear to ear. He is dressed in an old suit, and wears a muffler over a shirt of grey flannel. His movements are slow and heavy,*

suggesting the power of endurance, patient but somewhat grim, that is the basis of his nature. Alone with his wife at the opening of the play, he shows, as in his attitude to GWILYM *throughout, a certain rough tenderness, which is not seen in his relations with the other characters in the play.*

GWEN, *his wife, is of a different type—a gentle, soft-voiced woman, whose face is very kind and a little sad. Even in her smile there is a certain touch of wistfulness, suggesting some under-life in which memory and emotion have greatest power. She is a well-preserved little woman of sixty, with white hair. Her dress is simple but very neat. When the play begins, she is busily mending stockings, of which there is a stock in a basket which lies on the table near at hand.* PRICE, *with glasses on the end of his nose and his face screwed into an expression of fierce concentration, is addressing an envelope into which he puts a letter. He closes the envelope with a hearty bang.*

PRICE (*with a sigh of relief*) : **Well, thank goodness, that's done. I've just written to Lizzie Ann. You'll have her back here on Monday.**

GWEN : I didn't think, when I let her go down to Llantrisant, that I was going to miss her like this.

Of course, it would not be right to stop her, and them expecting a baby in the house in seven or eight weeks.

PRICE : Well, anyhow, back she'll be on Monday.

GWEN : It isn't so much the extra work on me I'm thinking of, but I miss her about the place here. She hasn't got too much sense, and you couldn't say she's such a great deal to look at—but, somehow, I miss her old face about the house.

PRICE (*stretching himself*) : I'm glad I've done those two letters. It's a job I can't abide—writing letters. Comes of having so little schooling, I suppose.

GWEN : Have you finished the letter to Myfanw', John ?

PRICE (*taking up two or three written sheets*) : Aay, my gel. Finished at last !

GWEN (*dropping the stocking to her lap*) : And you've put in that Gwilym is to go in five weeks' time ?

PRICE (*with a little sigh*) : Aay, my gel, I've put it in.

GWEN : I don't know how I'm going to part with him, John. I don't know how I'm going to

do it. It's an awful thing to part like this, and me his mother ! I can't understand, John, why God puts people together, if they've got to part after all.

PRICE : Don't you get low-hearted, Gwen fach. It's all for the best. You know yourself that Doctor Willie Jenkins was saying only the other day that part of Australia is the very place for a man in consumption. It's lucky for us Myfanw' asked us to send him out and her knowing that he's ill, too.

GWEN : Well, Myfanw'll be lucky to get him. Who could she get better to keep the accounts on the farm, and him writing such pretty bits of poetry—in English as well as Welsh ? I suppose you put in the letter about him winning the prize at the Eisteddfod in Mountain Ash ?

PRICE : Of course, Gwen ! Of course !

GWEN : And only five weeks now before he'll be going ! I don't want to stand in his light, John. But, oh, it's awful soon to lose him !

PRICE (*with rough tenderness*) : Think, Gwen, think what it means ! A few years, and then, after all the praying and heart-breaking we've had for him, we'll have him back again—a fine, strong man !

GWEN : Aay, John, I know, I know ! That's what I am trying to tell myself all the time. That's all I'm asking of the Almighty—to let me live to see our Gwilym have his health again. There's Lewis and John Henry—they can fight their way for themselves ; but for our Gwilym, poor boy, it's different. If only I am spared for that—to see him fine and strong and his face all brown with health—once, only just once before I die, and then I think I will go singing from the world !

PRICE (*looking over the letter to Myfanwy*) : How d'you spell ' endeavouring,' Gwen ?

GWEN (*very thoughtfully*) : ' Endeavouring ' ? Let me see now ! Christian Endeavour Society. E-n-d —I don't know ! Better for you, John bach, if you'd written in Welsh !

PRICE : Oh indeed ! And let her husband think I haven't got any English, and him and me not speaking when they left Aberpandy ? No fear ! (*Looking over the letter again.*) Aay ! If I'd only had a bit of schooling ! The chances they get to-day —board-school, intermediate, college ! (*He sighs regretfully.*)

GWEN (*after a pause*) : I wonder what he'll look like !

PRICE : Look like ? Who ?

GWEN : Our Gwilym—when he comes back strong and well. (*In a musing tone.*) It's a fine thing, John, for a woman to look at her children and see them all strong men, so strong that they could crush her with their hands, and those hands never lifted but in kindness. Still there's something, too—I can't explain—in the child that's weak and suffering keeps him very near your heart. It's like having one who didn't grow up like the rest, one that you must be always taking care of.

PRICE (*with a friendly rebuke*) : Gwen fach, you're always thinking of the boys !

GWEN (*with a touch of surprise*) : Well, 'ent I their mother ? D'you know, John, I can't help thinking Gwilym doesn't fancy his food as he ought to these last few days. That's the worst of this old hot weather ! I was saying this morning at breakfast if I could only get a chicken, I'd make a drop of broth nice and tasty. But it would cost a good bit would a chicken, and it's getting rather tight on us now, what with the strike and saving up enough to send him away—

PRICE (*bitterly*) : Aay, the strike ! One after another—strike, strike, strike ! Couldn't you

get one on old account from Parry the Fish Shop ?

GWEN : They aren't giving old account to anybody now. They lost so much bad debts in the last strike.

PRICE (*angrily*) : Aay, there you are ! (*He gets up and takes a few steps about the room.*) And that's the lot our Lewis is in with ! And a respectable man like me, that's paid his way all his life, has got to suffer for a gang of rodneys willing to shout with any fool that lifts his finger. (*Looking out through the window.*) They're down there now in the Drill Hall picking their new candidate for Parliament—and a fine beauty they will pick too !

GWEN (*who has been pursuing a course of private reflection*) : But there's one thing, John—I daresay I could get a bit of the best end of the neck and make him a bit of something tempting. (*John's anger collapses.*) We shall have to watch the money pretty close these next few weeks in order to get him some more things. I wouldn't like Myfanw' to see him without everything decent and respectable —three of each, say, and p'raps a dozen collars. (*She goes on with her mending.*)

PRICE (*somewhat grimly*) : Oh, he'll be respect-

able enough for my sister Myfanw', don't you fear ! I don't see that she's got grounds to be over particular.

GWEN : You mean, John, about her running away with the barman ?

PRICE : Aay, I do !

GWEN : Well, she married him ; that's something, anyhow.

PRICE : She was a disgrace to the family was our Vanw'. There was her father had been a deacon all those years, and me just made superintendent of the Sunday School !

GWEN : Well, John, it isn't for me to say anything against your father, and him in his grave to-day. But he was a hard man—too hard and too cold for a girl like Vanw'.

PRICE (*in an injured tone*) : He was a respectable, God-fearing man and died without anyone being able to say he owed so much as a ha'penny. And he lived in his own house for twenty years—freehold mind you, too !

GWEN : All the same, John, I don't agree with bringing up children as if there was always a corpse in the house. And she was a strange girl was Myfanw'—all life and fire and feeling. And the way

she used to sing ! I can't help thinking our John Henry is growing up to look the living image of his Aunt Myfanw'.

PRICE : There is a bit of likeness, it's true. And there's no denying he's got a grand voice.

GWEN : And there's something about his nose and chin, too. Have you put anything about him in the letter ?

PRICE : Oh, yes ! (*Resuming his seat and reading.*) 'We are expecting our John Henry back from college—'

GWEN : University, John, University !

PRICE (*making an alteration*) : 'From the University in Cardiff to-morrow or the day after. I think I told you before that he is preparing for the ministry. He is now in his second year, and next year he will be trying for the B.A.'

GWEN (*to herself with great gusto*) : The Rev. John Henry Price, B.A.

PRICE : 'Perhaps he will study for the B.D. afterwards, but that isn't quite settled yet. Fortunately —(*Gwen looks up at the long word.*)—fortunately he won a County Exhibition, so that we don't have to keep him altogether.'

GWEN : We couldn't have done it, John, not with poor Gwilym bad as he is. It's been hard enough, even with Sam lodging here.

PRICE (*letting the letter drop to the table*) : That was a grand sermon he gave us last Christmas, Gwen—a grand sermon ! There aren't many not yet out of college would venture on a text like that—' In the beginning was the Word '—' Yn y dechreuad yr oedd y Gair.' I can't understand him sending Isaac Pugh's William Ewart up to Treherbert the other Sunday. Must have been a great disappointment to them up there.

GWEN : Working hard for the exams he is, no doubt, because he hasn't written home these last few weeks—nothing beyond a couple of picture postcards.

PRICE : I can't say Isaac Pugh was very enthusiastic about the sermon last Christmas, though the other deacons praised it beyond.

GWEN : Well, you see, John, Isaac Pugh's William Ewart is studying for a preacher, too, so p'raps we oughtn't to expect it.

PRICE : No. He couldn't stomach it was our John Henry won the County Exhibition, and not his William Ewart. And then he's so set on giving

the call to Jones of Dowlais. He's getting that polite is Isaac Pugh, I can hardly abide talking to him.

GWEN : I suppose you've told Myfanw' about the call to Horeb ? She'll sure to be interested, and her sitting in the corner by the harmonium from the time she was baptised.

PRICE (*taking up the letter again*) : ' You'll be glad to hear that, after being without a regular pastor since Roberts and his gang started the split at Bethania, we're going to give a call in Horeb at last.' (*He pauses a moment and reflects.*) I don't know, Gwen, if you've been thinking what I've been thinking about this call ?

GWEN (*calmly*) : Yes, John, I have.

PRICE (*with enthusiasm*) : Well, it would be a grand thing if John Henry had finished college and could have it, wouldn't it now ? Of course, it's only seven pound a month, but he'd be able to work it up.

GWEN (*laying down her mending*) : And he'd be able to live at home with us, and I could look after his clothes. What we'd have to do would be to turn Lewis's bedroom into a study, and Lewis could have Gwilym's room in the back. Anyhow, John Henry

will be here till October. That's one comfort ; for it's a strange house it will be to me with Gwilym going across the water. (*She sighs.*) Five weeks ! Only five more weeks !

PRICE : Dewch nawr, Gwen ! Dewch ! It's no use looking at it like that.

GWEN : I can't help it, John bach. I'm as God made me. Somehow, I feel afraid—afraid of the waiting and the waiting, thinking of him day and night, and him away in foreign parts. I'll be seeing his face every hour of the day, if I only shut my eyes, and his voice will keep on coming back to me as I go about the house and out in the garden by his bank of flowers. (*Saying this, she gets up slowly and puts the basket of stockings on the dresser. Then, turning a little, she happens to look through the window. She starts, and begins to talk more briskly.*) Tan i marw ! Here's Gwilym and Sam coming up from the crossing, and I haven't so much as laid the tea ! (*She takes the white cloth from the dresser drawer.*) There's talk you do, John ! (*Spreading cloth on table.*) I don't like the boys to come home, and things not ready. A woman can't expect to keep much of a hold on her children, if she doesn't look after their comfort. (*She bustles into the back-kitchen, and a rattle of crockery is heard.*) Pity

Lizzie Ann isn't here, too ! She may be dull ; I'm always telling her she's not quite sixteen ounces—(*bustling in with a basket containing cups and saucers*)—but she's handy, and it's nice to see her old face about the house. And I'll get that drop of broth ready for his supper. (*She takes vase of flowers from dresser and puts it on table. Steps are heard without.*)

(*Enter* GWILYM *and* SAM THATCHER.)

(SAM *is a man of forty-two but looks older, his hair being thin and grizzled, his face tanned by exposure and adorned with a ragged grey moustache. He has lost his left arm, and the empty sleeve is fixed into the pocket of his rough blue coat. His trousers, strapped up under the knee, are of old moleskin with 'cross' pockets, to the edge of which he hooks his thumb in an easy attitude. Under his arm he carries a red flag, rolled up. His accent proclaims him a Cockney, and his general air of suffering superiority to Aberpandy and all its works indicates a haughty metropolitan outlook.*

GWILYM *is a young man of twenty-three to twenty-four, simply and neatly dressed. His thin, pale face tells of disease. His expression suggests*

thoughtfulness and a fund of sympathy, purified of humbug by quiet humour. He speaks in a reflective manner, often searching the listener's face as if given to probing through the surface of things for the causes beneath. In his bearing towards others there is the natural courtesy of one born with fine instincts. He is treated by all with the greatest kindness, concern for his welfare being the common element that keeps the household together.)

PRICE (*with great sympathy*) : Wel, Gwilym, ffor' ma'i nawr, machan-i ?

GWEN : Where you've been all the time, boy bach ? And the weather so hot like this ?

PRICE : I was telling your mother after dinner you ought to lie down a bit in the afternoons.

GWILYM : That's all right, 'nhad !

GWEN : Sit down, 'nghariad-i. You shall have your tea in a minute.

(GWEN *hurries into the back-kitchen.* GWILYM *moves towards the chair to the right of the dresser, but the old man, murmuring, ' All right, my boy, all right,' anticipates him and brings up the chair, placing it on the left of his own chair, which remains as before.* SAM, *having placed flag on the dresser, takes the chair on which* GWEN *formerly sat. This*

is his usual place at table. The three men seat themselves. GWILYM *takes vase and examines the blossoms with the eye of a good judge.*)

SAM (*mopping his forehead*) : It's a scorcher, boss—a fair scorcher ; that's wot it is ! If this 'ere weather goes on on top of orl the bloomin' eloquence we're 'avin'—there'll be trouble 'ere in Aberpandy. Mawk my words, boss, I'm telling yer nah.

(GWEN *comes in with the tea-pot and a large plate of bread and butter and a plate of small round cakes. She takes the chair from left of dresser and sits on* SAM'S *right.* LEWIS'S *place—between* GWILYM *and* GWEN—*is thus left vacant.* GWEN *pours out the tea.*)

GWEN : Where have you been, Gwilym ?

GWILYM : Well, I went for a stroll as far as the Institute, and then I thought I'd wait to hear whom they had selected as candidate.

PRICE : That feller Pinkerton, I suppose.

SAM : Got it, boss, got it fust taime !

(PRICE *shakes his head in disgust.*)

GWEN : Bread and butter, Sam ?

SAM : Skooliki da, as yer say dahn 'ere, missis. Skooliki da !

(*Knock at door.*)

GWEN : Come in.

(ISAAC PUGH *appears in the doorway—an old man in a shabby suit. Relations between him and* PRICE *having been strained by the affairs of Horeb, his attitude is rather formal, but, at the same time, touched with a suggestion of meek apology.*)

GWEN (*coldly polite*) : Ah ! Shwt ych-chi, Isaac Pugh ? Dewch miwn.

PUGH : Shwt ych-chi 'ma heddy' ? (*Hesitating in doorway.*) Having tea you are ?

GWEN : Yes, yes. Come in you. (*Pointing to the chair by the parlour door.*) Will you take a cup with us ?

PUGH (*advancing across the room*) : No indeed ! No indeed ! Dim, diolch. Just had my tea I have. (*He sits down.*)

GWEN : There's plenty of welcome, mind you now.

PUGH : Oh yes ! I know, I know ! (*To* PRICE.) —I suppose you've heard the news ?

PRICE : Aay, I've heard.

PUGH : Well, I never thought I'd live to see a man like that Pinkerton being Member of Parliament for the valley—never !

GWILYM : They say he's a very able man, Mr. Pugh.

PRICE : It's men like him are the curse of South Wales to-day. Who is he, I'd like to know, that he should be made a proper ' god ' of ? I've been in the valley here now for sixty years. I remember Aberpandy before ever the Powell-Griffiths sank the first pit, and the sheep of Pandy Farm were grazing quiet where the Bryndu Pit is now. And I never so much as heard talk of this fellow Pinkerton till two or three years ago.

PUGH : Well, I thought it was understood, long enough ago, too, that Evan Davies would get it, when George Llewelyn went.

GWILYM : He'd have had it ten years ago, Mr. Pugh. He might have had it five years ago. But there's a change come over the valley.

PRICE : Aay, Gwilym, a change, a sad change and a bad one. A good steady man is Evan Davies —a tidy, respectable man and been a deacon for twenty years I know of. I remember the time when we went down the valley together to see Gladstone.

(*He looks up at Gladstone's portrait on the wall.*) Aay—yr hên Gladstone ! There was a man for you ! And look at this feller Pinkerton. D'you ever hear of him so much as darkening the door of a chapel —or even of the Church for a matter of that ? Why can't he hold his old meetings on some other day than Sunday ? Isn't it hard enough to keep the congregation together without him and his meetings ? ' Six days shalt thou labour '—' Chwe diwrnod y gweithi '—isn't it written ? But, of course, that don't count to-day.

GWEN (*pouring out a cup of tea*) : Ah yes ! It isn't like it was, when we'd have to bring the benches out of the vestry on a Sunday night. (*Giving the cup of tea to her husband that he may pass it on.*) Take you this in your hand by there now, Isaac Pugh.

PUGH : Well, indeed now, I didn't want it. But since you're so kind— (*He takes the tea and stirs it with vigour. Then drinks it.*)

GWEN (*holding out the plate of bread and butter*) : Sure now you won't have a bit of bread and butter ? There's a nice thin piece for you.

PUGH : Well, indeed, Mrs. Price fach, since you're so pressing— (*He gets up and takes a bit of bread and butter.*)

GWEN : I suppose, Isaac Pugh, like us, you're looking forward to them coming home from college ?

PRICE (*lying hospitably*) : I heard your William Ewart did very well up in Treherbert the other Sunday.

PUGH : I had a letter from William Ewart this morning. (*He hesitates a moment, looking furtively from* PRICE *to* GWEN.) Have you heard from John Henry lately ?

GWEN : Only a few picture postcards these last few weeks, but we haven't worried him about it, and him studying for the examination. Awful things, those old examinations ! I hope his landlady is looking after him ; though I must say she seemed a tidy little woman, if she was Church of England.

PUGH (*more or less to himself*) : I wonder he hasn't written ! (*Changing the subject.*)—I suppose your Lewis has been working for Pinkerton, Price ?

SAM : Workin' ? Workin' ? Not 'arf ! 'E's been at it ever since the other feller daied ! There's one thing abaht Lewis, any'ah—'e can tork. I've 'eard 'em in Trafalgar Square ; I've 'eard 'em in 'Yde Pawk ; I've 'eard 'em on Tahr rill (Tower Hill). But I've never 'eard one as could better 'im. Where 'e gits it from, I don't know. Arter electin'

the candidite this arternewn, they 'ad a public meetin' over the quest'n of the blacklegs they say the mawsters are torkin' of bringin' in. And yer orter've 'eard 'im ! Sich shahtin', sich waivin' of 'is awms, and 'is eyes burnin' laike fire in 'is 'ead, and the people risin' to 'im laike as if 'e'd mesmeraised 'em. Arter it was over, 'e was clean done and shaikin' laike a leaf. 'E's nothin' but a bundle of red 'ot feelin's is Lewis. But 'e's a smawt chap, if only 'e could keep 'is 'ead a bit—a smawt chap !

GWEN (*with great pleasure*): There you are, John ! Didn't I always tell you ? And him left school when he was only fourteen too ! But there was no keeping him back. Off he went to the night-school every winter. And the books he was always buying—him only a collier too !

GWILYM : There's one thing about Lewis, whether you agree with him or not, you can't help feeling proud of him.

GWEN : That's it, Gwilym, proud of him. That's it. You can't help it—

PRICE : Aay, there's a fat lot to be proud of. Fine ideas he's got hold of—all this here Socialism and Agnosticism, as he calls it. Why, he's worse than the Unitarians !

GWEN (*shocked*) : Taw sôn, John ! For shame on you ! Worse than the Unitarians !

SAM : Maind yer, I don't blime 'im. Ow no ! If I could tork laike 'im, I'd be a Socialist meself termorrer ! It's only 'uman niture. And if I was a mawster, I'd do wot I bloomin' well laiked with my pits. That's only 'uman niture, tew ! O' course this 'ere Socialism is orl tommy-rot, but since the men will 'ave it, why shouldn't Lewis give it 'em as well as any body else ?

GWEN (*innocently*): Of course. That's what I've been thinking.

SAM : And if there's any pickin's ter be got aht of it, why shouldn't 'e get 'em as well as any other feller ?

GWILYM : You wicked old cynic, Sam !

SAM : Nah, me son, no nimes ! Wot I sez is—In this 'ere world yer've got ter use yer common sense ; that's orl. Why shouldn't 'e git inter Parliament, as well as the rest of 'em ?—Four 'undred a year nah, and a naice soft job—

GWILYM (*looking over* SAM'S *shoulder to the window*) : H'sh ! Here he is !

(*Enter* LEWIS *with a parcel under his arm. He*

is between twenty-eight and thirty years of age. His face is pale, clean-shaven, and very mobile. His dark, intense eyes suggest great nervous energy, but his mouth is sensitive rather than strong. A lock of his waving black hair falls carelessly over his forehead. All his movements are rapid. His demeanour is always restless, and indicates a lack of mental repose. In speaking, he gesticulates with graceful vigour. His voice is sweet and resonant, and, when it rises to declamation, there is in it a faintly plaintive note.)

GWEN (*rising*) : Well, Lewis, so you've come at last ? I'll make you a cup of tea nice and fresh. (*Taking tea-pot, she goes towards back-kitchen.*)

LEWIS : One minute, mam, there's this. (*He holds out the parcel.*)

GWEN (*taking parcel*) : What is it, Lewis ? (*Opening parcel.*)—Well, tan i marw, it's a chicken ! O Lewis bach, and you so busy making such grand speeches ! How did you remember, boy bach ?

LEWIS : Oh, I suppose I had it at the back of my head since you mentioned it this morning. Old Parry the Fish Shop had been worrying me to take a present since I taught him to ride a bicycle ; so I just slipped down and called quits on the chicken. (*He takes chair from near kitchen door, and goes to his place*

at the table.) Don't be long, mam, I've got to go to a committee.

(GWEN *goes into the back-kitchen, lost in admiration of the bird.*)

SAM : And when yer come to consider the saize of Parry, it would 'a' been a bit more appropriaite if 'e'd mide it a turkey.

(GWILYM *laughs.* LEWIS *only smiles a little, vaguely.*)

LEWIS : I saw you at the meeting, Gwilym.

GWILYM : Did you ? Your speech was wonderful, Lewis.

LEWIS : Wasn't it rather hot there for you ?

GWILYM : Well, it was a bit ; but I didn't want to go away without hearing you.

(*The two brothers interchange smiles. There is evidently a great bond between them.* GWEN *comes in with the tea-pot, a cup and saucer, and a plate. She pours out a cup of tea for* LEWIS.)

GWEN : Bread and butter, Lewis ?

LEWIS : No, thanks, nothing to eat.

GWEN (*coaxingly*) : Dera nawr, dera ! One of my round cakes then ? You won't turn up your nose at my tishen gron ?

LEWIS (*taking one of the cakes*) : Thank you, mam.

(*He goes on with his tea, lost in thought.*)

GWEN : More tea, Sam ?

SAM : Well, diolk un vawer, missis. Diolk un vawer !

GWEN (*pouring out* SAM'S *tea*) : Well, we'll have Lizzie Ann back on Monday. That's one thing, however. I missed her by me in chapel last Sunday, I can't tell you. (*She resumes her seat.*)

PUGH : Talking of Horeb, Price, I had a little chat this morning with Rees the Top Shop and Powell the Stockings—

PRICE : Oh, indeed !

PUGH : They aren't so sure now, after all, it's Thomas Llanstephan ought to have the call.

PRICE (*with determination*) : So you're trying to talk them round, are you, Isaac Pugh ?

PUGH : No, no ! We just had a few words as I was passing—

PRICE : I tell you that Jones of Dowlais and his New Theology, as you call it, aren't going to put foot in Horeb.

PUGH (*insinuatingly*) : But, Price bach, you can't deny he's just the man to draw the young people—

PRICE : We've got other business in Horeb, Isaac Pugh, than to draw the young people. We've got to preach the living truth to men that have got to die ; and, if the young people won't give heed, so much the worse for them on Judgment Day and for those who've blinded them. New Theology indeed !

GWEN : What's it all about—this New Theology they're talking of ?

PRICE : It's making black white and white black. It's making religion neither one thing nor the other. It's treating the Devil himself as if he was one of the twelve Apostles—

GWEN (*dismissing the topic from her mind*) : Well, if it goes against the Bible—of course, there's an end to it.

PUGH : Well, indeed, for my own part, I prefer the old-fashioned preaching and a bit of hwyl here and there.

GWEN : It's very pretty—a bit of hwyl towards the end, very pretty !

PUGH : But the old fashion doesn't draw the young people. I can't stand by and see Horeb getting emptier and emptier—

PRICE : And I can't stand by either and see it go into the hands of them that's making a mockery of religion. I can't do it, Isaac Pugh. I'd just as soon see it go to the Roman Catholics. Who was it built Horeb up there on the hillside, more than forty years ago ? Men like your father and my father, and old Job Williams and Roderick Rees the gaffer—sober, God-fearing men that you don't see here in Aberpandy to-day. And how was it built, Isaac Pugh ? Have you forgot so soon ? Every day, after coming home from the pit, every day we did a little, tired as we were, for the love of the cause. You were there, and I was there—young men just turned twenty—your father, my father, and all the others. Stone by stone we built it. With our own hands we built it, for the glory of His name. I've sat there, Sunday after Sunday, all these years. All that I have known noble and good, all that has given me power to go on from day to day, has come from that old chapel up there on the hill. And d'you think Isaac Pugh, I'll stand by and see it lost without making a struggle ?

(GWEN *sighs with a kind of pleasant melancholy, as is her way when the talk is of bygone days.* LEWIS *who has listened to the latter part of his father's speech, smiles somewhat contemptuously.* GWILYM

is looking from his father to LEWIS, *watching them keenly.* SAM *is staring at the ceiling, hoping that someone will change the subject.*)

PUGH : Aay, that's all very well, Price. Good days they were, I don't deny ; and us able to pay the preacher so much as eleven pound a month. But now, mun, it's as much as we can do to raise seven.

PRICE : There's things that matter more than money.

PUGH : Not if you're treasurer of the chapel, as you'd find out in my place, Price. For my own part, I hope Jones of Dowlais will get it, however.

PRICE : There's only one theology I know of, and Jones of Dowlais can't alter it, nor all the other Joneses either.

PUGH : It's the young people—

SAM (*cheerfully*) : Aw well ! Boys will be boys, yer know. Boys will be boys !

PUGH (*mysteriously*) : Aay, I've always said you never know how they'll turn out. (LEWIS *looks at him inquiringly.*) No, no ! I don't mean you, Lewis, I don't mean you.

PRICE : Well, who d'you mean, then ?

PUGH (*changing the topic again*) : So you got Pinkerton nominated between you then, Lewis ?

LEWIS : Yes, I don't think anybody would have a chance against him. There were a few who supported Evan Davies, but I knew we'd get a majority for Pinkerton.

PUGH : He's a proper firebrand, I think. I can't abide a man like that. None of the old stock here wanted him.

PRICE (*bitterly*) : That don't count in Aberpandy now, Pugh. If you want advice to-day, you've got to listen to the boys. If you want to be heard at all, you must talk of nothing but strikes and the rights of the working-man. You must stir up strife all over the place—

LEWIS (*looking straight into his father's face*) : Yes, you must stir up strife—all over the place. As long as Labour and Capital exist as they do now, you must stir up strife—all over the place.

PUGH : There you are, Price. That's the kind of talk you've got to listen to now. That's the kind of thing that goes down with them to-day.

PRICE (*seriously*) : Now, listen to me, Lewis. If you and the like of you go on talking like this, and the temper of the men rising every day, sooner or later there'll be Hell upon earth here in Aberpandy.

LEWIS : There's never been anything but Hell upon earth here in Aberpandy ; but it shan't be Hell for ever.

PUGH : What's the matter with Aberpandy, Lewis ? Your father and me have been living here now this sixty years—and it's good enough for us.

LEWIS : It may be ; but it isn't good enough for me and the men I stand for. Here you are, you and my father, squabbling as to which of your candidates is to be given this job in Horeb—at starvation wages.

PUGH (*indignantly*) : Squabbling ? D'you say squabbling ? I'm sure—

LEWIS (*rising*) : Aay, squabbling ! D'you think we are going to lose our sleep over Jones of Dowlais or Thomas Llanstephan ? There's another kind of fight going on here, if you only knew it. Labour and Capital are at grips, always, always ! Whether we're working or whether we're striking, we're fighting that battle, day by day and hour by hour. And you're not in the fighting line. You're prisoners of the past. It's tied your hands and it's blinded your eyes—

PUGH : Fine words, my boy ; but wait you a bit—

LEWIS (*beginning to be carried away by the force of his own words*) : The time for waiting is done

with ; it's time for doing now. All along you've been waiting and compromising. You called yourselves 'Liberal-Labour.' Even your very name was compromise—and that's why you've never, never done anything at all.

PRICE : I've done my duty all my life, and I've paid my way to the last ha'penny.

LEWIS : Yes, you have, I know. And what's the end of it all ? You can scarcely sleep at night—now in your old age—because you've got to take a few shillings out of the Post Office in the time of need. You've had a long, grey life, and you lived it the best you knew. You haven't been a waster or a drunkard ; but tell me—tell me honestly—are you so much better off than the man who is ? Why ! If this is all that's possible for men, if this is the beginning and the end, then I say that the sooner they drink themselves to death the better it will be for them.

PUGH : You hear that, Price ? You hear the kind of talk that's going on ?

PRICE (*getting up and raising his voice*) : I won't have this ungodliness in my house. D'you hear that ?

(LEWIS *faces his father. His lips are set, his eyes ablaze. He shows signs of intense emotional*

strain.) If that's part of the New Gospel you talk about—

LEWIS : Aay, that's part of it ; There are terms on which it's cowardly to live, and those are the terms on which you and the like of you are living. You may be satisfied with slavery ; but we are not—

PUGH : Slavery ?

LEWIS : Aay, slavery ; And there on Bryndu stands the pit that is your master. From the cradle to the grave, it's been holding you in the hollow of its hand. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, the bed you lie in—it's master of them all, aay, almost of the very souls within you ! When it gives, it gives with grudging, and, when it gives no more, sooner or later, you've got to tighten your belt and see the sorrow writing deep on the faces of the women. But it's not going on for ever, I tell you ; and all your cowardice and cant won't serve to save it.

PRICE : No. We must leave it to loafers and unbelievers to put things right to-day.

LEWIS : Don't make a mistake. Men were never more earnest than they are now. There's something stirring in the dark. All over the wide earth it's stirring, and there's nothing can keep it still. Call it Socialism, Syndicalism, unrest, or revo-

lution. Call it what you like. But it's the worker coming to his own at last through suffering and through struggle. And here in Aberpandy we're facing our share of the battle—we, the young men you make light of. And we're facing it not only for ourselves, but for the men and women to come after, who'll know the things we didn't know and hardly dared to dream. (*Taking his cap from dresser and going towards the door.*) But you're not with us. You're looking back ; we're looking forward. And, because you're looking back, you can't understand what's going on about you day by day.

(*He goes out.* PUGH *and* PRICE *exchange furtive glances.* GWEN *follows* LEWIS'S *departure, moving a few steps towards the window. Her face shows bewilderment, through which shines maternal pride.* GWILYM *watches his father with an expression touched with pity.* SAM *is smoking hard, with an appearance of critical appreciation.*)

SAM : Well, I'm a tariff reformer, meself ; but I don't maind allowin' 'e can tork. I enjoy listenin' to 'im, some'ah. O'course, it's only 'is enthewsiasm —'is Celtic enthewsiasm, I suppose yer'd call it.

GWEN : There's a man he'd be in the pulpit ! I always think he's just the man for the pulpit, when I hear him going on like that.

PUGH : I don't deny he's got power, Mrs. Price ; but he's a strange chap—a strange chap ! I can't understand him being his father's child.

GWILYM : He's the child of his times, Mr. Pugh.

GWEN : Well, you know, Isaac Pugh, if your children happen to be born clever, 'tisn't the same as if they were born only middling—

PUGH (*nettled*) : It seems to me, however, it would be better for them to be born a bit less clever and a bit more respectful.

SAM (*judicially*) : They say it's a wise chaild that knows its own fawther ; but it's a waiser fawther that can arrainge to 'ave 'is chaild accordin' to 'is laikin' !

PUGH : What I say is—A man ought to be able to control his own sons—

PRICE : Sons ? Sons ? I don't deny I may have got grounds of complaint about Lewis. If Gwilym here wasn't a bit fond of him, he'd have been out of the house long ago—

GWEN (*shocked*) : John !

PRICE (*to* PUGH, *not heeding her*) : But there's John Henry now so good a boy as any father could wish—

GWEN : And not only good, Isaac Pugh, but clever.

PUGH (*with a contemptuous snort*) : Bit too clever, I'm thinking.

GWEN (*very sweetly*) : Come now, Isaac Pugh. Wara têg for John Henry. You mustn't be down on him just because he happened to win—

PUGH : Well, I'll say this for Lewis, anyhow, whatever he's done, it's always before your face.

(*There is some sensation after this. All rise except* SAM.)

PRICE (*taking a step towards* PUGH) : What d'you mean, Isaac Pugh ?

GWEN : What's our John Henry done ? Quick ! Tell me !

PUGH : (*To* PRICE.)—P'raps I may as well tell you now.

PRICE : Well ?

PUGH : You'd have to hear sooner or later—

PRICE : Out with it, mun !

PUGH : I had a letter from our William Ewart this morning—

PRICE : Well ?

PUGH : John Henry's going to throw up the ministry—

GWEN : What ?

PRICE : It's a lie, Isaac Pugh !

PUGH (*putting his hand into his pocket*) : I've got the letter here. Look at it, you !

PRICE (*in a low, broken voice*) : John Henry, too ! Duw mawr, John Henry, too !

Curtain.

CHANGE.

ACT II.

Evening of the following Sunday.

SCENE: The same.

The table is now closer to the fire-place. The sweet-peas in the vase on the dresser have been changed. PRICE'S *week-day coat and a straw hat with Cardiff College band are behind door on left.* SAM, *in his best clothes, is sitting on the left hand side of the dresser, his face hidden behind the 'News of the World.'* GWILYM, *reading a copy of 'Cymru,' is seated in the arm-chair, which is now on the left side of the table.* LEWIS *is standing near the window, looking out.* JOHN HENRY *is seated in the chair by the parlour door. He is a young man of twenty-one, in appearance something like his brother* LEWIS. *Just now he is lost in thought. There is a short spell of silence; then* GWILYM, *unconsciously, begins to hum the old Welsh hymn, 'Bydd myrdd o ryfeddodau'. After a bar or two,* LEWIS *and* JOHN HENRY *take it up in harmony.* SAM *lowers the newspaper and looks at the brothers with perplexity and disgust.*

SAM : Cheerful, ain't it ? Cawn't yer give us somethin' a bit more laively ? Laife ain't orl a fun'ril, long drawn aht.

LEWIS : Strange what a hold they get on a man—those old hymns. (*Sits down on chair by window.*)

JOHN HENRY : Yes, very strange ! They seem to get down into your blood somehow.

SAM : Not maine, me boy. No fear ! Gimme a seat in a music 'all, a pot o' beer, a paipe of baccy, and I'm 'appy—pufficklY 'appy. (*Looking at the clock.*) I suppose the boss and the missis will be 'ome from chapel before long nah. I'd better 'op it.

GWILYM : They won't be here for some time yet. It's the first Sunday in the month. And there'll be a lot of talk about the Church Meeting next week. They're going to choose the pastor then.

LEWIS : Aay. There'll be father pulling the strings for Thomas Llanstephan and Isaac Pugh pulling the strings for Jones of Dowlais, so that one of them can get seven pounds a month for preaching claptrap to a lot of old women. Ach !

SAM : Steady nah, Lewis ! Steady, me boy ! I don't 'old with goin' agen religion. I've bin a sailor in me taime ; and when yer've spent a few

years aht on the maighty deep—as the song sez—yer gits the idea there may be more in religion than yer think. So there's no 'awm in bein' perlite ter it, any'ah.

GWILYM : After all, Lewis, you must make allowance for their view of things, or how can you expect them to make allowance for yours ?

LEWIS : I tell you it makes me wild to see them worrying over things that don't matter twopence.

GWILYM : It's a low price, Lewis, for honest convictions.

LEWIS (*getting up with his usual restlessness*) : Jones of Dowlais or Thomas Llanstephan—what does it matter ? Think of the great problems round us—staring at us—crying at us—everywhere ! Look at this place we're living in—mean streets, mean homes, mean chapels, mean public-houses ! On and on the people go, driven by some blind impulse within them, breeding children who will grow up to go through the same old senseless round —unless we change it. (*Grimly.*)—Unless we change it !

SAM : Where yer gits the words from beats me 'oller—simply 'oller !

JOHN HENRY : O Lewis, if you only knew how I envy your enthusiasm ! I'm so sick of fighting things. Don't you ever get tired of it all ?

LEWIS : Get tired ? Yes, I do. Often and often. But then I remember what it is we're fighting for, and I see them in my mind, those men and women of the future. There are great things going to happen, things that I want to have a hand in shaping. And when I think of all this, I'm not tired any longer.

SAM : Nah wot I sez, Lewis, is—It's no use lettin' yer feelin's git the better of yer judgment and spoilin' yer chawnces. It don't do yer no good in the long run ter go settin' yerself up agen religion as yer do. It's got a strong 'old dahn 'ere, and yer mustn't fergit it. Nah taike my tip—Christian Socialism is the tack yer orter go on ; it is, strite !

GWILYM (*smiling, but earnest*) : Now then, devil's advocate ! He's much better as he is. As I've told you before, you're the most cynical old—

SAM : Nah, Gwilym, no nimes, no 'awd nimes ! I'm older than orl of yer, and I'm advaisin' of yer for yer own good. When yer gits on in years a bit, yer gits ter see that laife is a thing o' give and taike —and the waiser yer are, the less yer gives and the more yer taikes. That's abaht wot it comes tew.

GWILYM : Nonsense, Sam !

JOHN HENRY : That's all very well ; but a man's got his conscience to consider. There are times when it's right to make a stand.

SAM : Sometaimes it may be raite and agen sometaimes it may be wrong ; but it's always very disturbin'.

JOHN HENRY : I knew that. But I did right. Don't you think so, Lewis ?

LEWIS : Quite right. It was the only thing to do.

JOHN HENRY : Father's scarcely looked at me since I've been home. Isaac Pugh passed me in the street without stopping. I'm not a criminal.

LEWIS : No. But they'll be down on you as if you'd committed murder. (*Bitterly.*)—I know what they're like—the old brigade.

JOHN HENRY : You don't blame me, Gwilym ?

GWILYM : No, I don't blame you. I'm sorry ; that's all. You've made up your mind, John Henry ?

JOHN HENRY : Quite. I don't care what happens, but I won't go back to it.

LEWIS : What will you do now ?

JOHN HENRY : I don't know. Teach, I suppose. I'm not sure I like the idea of it.

LEWIS : I don't think he'll let you go back to finish your degree.

JOHN HENRY : If he doesn't suggest it, I shan't ask him.

SAM : Yer don't think, John 'Enry, yer maite in taime bring yerself ter toe the laine agen, so ter speak ?

JOHN HENRY : Never ! I'm out of it now. You don't know what misery it was—those heavy days and those endless nights !

GWILYM : Of course, you understand it's bound to be a terrible blow for father.

JOHN HENRY : Yes, I know. That's why I hung on through this second session. I never dreamt a man's mind could change like this in a couple of years.

SAM (*with kind curiosity*) : Wot was it put yer orf it, if I may awsk the question ?

JOHN HENRY (*with a gesture of helplessness*) : Oh ! I can't explain. It all just slipped away ; that's all. I suppose I made up my mind too soon. It seemed so easy up here in Aberpandy after the Revival.

SAM : Aw yus ! The Deewigiad !

JOHN HENRY : But down there in Cardiff it was different.

GWILYM : How ?

JOHN HENRY : I hadn't to work very hard, because I had taken Higher Honours. So I read all kinds of things.

SAM : Aw yus ! There yer are, Lewis. Wot did I tell yer ? Give me the newspiper.

JOHN HENRY : I went about—to concerts and plays.

SAM : Did yer ever see George Robey, John 'Enry ? I seen 'im many a taime before I got stuck in this Gawd-fersaiken 'ole. 'E wasn't 'arf a corf-drop was George ! Yer orter 'ave seen 'im as the pre'istoric man. Laugh ? That ain't no word for it !

JOHN HENRY : There never was any laughter in this house, not even when we were children.

LEWIS : There's little room for laughter in the homes of the poor.

JOHN HENRY (*to* GWILYM) : Sometimes I almost feel sorry we didn't stick to Roman Catholicism, all of us. I've met five or six fellows who think that too.

GWILYM (*looking at him more closely*) : Oh !

JOHN HENRY : Say what you like, it's got a place for joy and beauty.—It isn't that I didn't try to keep to the old faith. You mustn't think I didn't try, Gwilym.

GWILYM : I know that.

JOHN HENRY : But, somehow, the harder I tried to grasp it, the more it crumbled away.

LEWIS : You're not the only one who's been through that, John Henry.

JOHN HENRY : It's horrible, Gwilym—all through the day as you try to work, and then at night as you tramp along under the stars—always that one same question, always, always ! But no answer ever comes.

SAM : Well, it isn't for me ter say nothin'. Wot yer torkin' abaht nah is a bit above me. But wot I've always said is, Give me comfort. And it ain't a bad motter, either.

GWILYM : Didn't you ask advice from older men, John Henry ?

JOHN HENRY : At first I was afraid to say anything about it, but I found out afterwards there were many others like me. The older men didn't understand, as far as I could see. Some of them mentioned Darwin, as if it was all his fault. And then sometimes I had to preach. D'you know, Gwilym, I got to hate the very thought of Sunday.

GWILYM : You kept up your publications, then ?

JOHN HENRY : For a time. It was only trying to convince myself. Then I began to send other students in my place. But I knew I couldn't go on with it. Sooner or later, Gwilym, it had to come. I simply couldn't go on.

GWILYM : It's a hard case at best—a hard case !

JOHN HENRY : But what I can't understand is the way so many take it. After all, I couldn't help myself, and it's I who've suffered most. Yet they treat me as if I'd done some dreadful thing. Look at father and Isaac Pugh.

LEWIS : It's the way of the old brigade, John Henry. They think they've got the truth, and the whole truth. They hate any new idea—

GWILYM : Yes ; but, Lewis, they can't help it. You sympathise with John Henry because you understand. You know it's only change. The old brigade,

as you call them—they think it's desertion. Remember, the things you're leaving are a part of their very lives. Don't you see ?

LEWIS : I'll tell you what I see—a lot of cantankerous old devils, too out-of-date to do anything themselves and too jealous to let alone those who can.

GWILYM (*reflectively*) : I see something quite different—something rather sad.

LEWIS : What is it ?

GWILYM : It's men and women growing old in a world that doesn't understand them, and that they themselves don't understand. Sometimes, I think that because I'm an invalid, and perhaps, too, because I'm a bit of a poet—I see things in the old brigade that you've never realized. Half my time I've been on my back, outside life altogether, thinking and looking on. It's all very well for you, Lewis—

LEWIS (*with protest*) : All very well for me ?

GWILYM : Yes. It's quite all right for you. You're on the winning side. You've got the great ally—

LEWIS : What ally ?

GWILYM : Time ; and in your heart you know it. You've only got to wait, and you'll win. But the old brigade can only see that they're losing, and they're bewildered, pressed on all sides by things that they don't understand. If they argue with you, they get beaten. Why ? Because they've been careful to give you the education they never had themselves—

JOHN HENRY : But they won't understand.

GWILYM : Because, of course, they can't understand. Take father's case now ? Did ever any man work harder ? (*To* LEWIS.)—Tell me.

LEWIS : No, I suppose not.

GWILYM : Could any man ever have denied himself more than he has done ? (*To* JOHN HENRY.)—Come, John Henry, answer.

JOHN HENRY : No, I must confess. Nobody could have.

GWILYM : You said just now there'd never been any laughter in this house. I'll tell you why. There's been one long, slow self-sacrifice ; and the world needs sacrifice as much as it needs laughter. Don't be hard on him, boys, because he doesn't look at things with your eyes. He can't help himself any

more than you. He belongs to the old valley. At heart he's of the agricultural class—slow, stolid, and conservative. You, Lewis, you're of a different kind altogether—you've grown up in modern industry, with no roots in the soil. That's why you're a rebel. That's why the men of your time are rebels too.

(*Knock at door.*)

LEWIS : Come in.

(*The door opens.* DAI MATTHEWS *and* TWM POWELL *are seen in the doorway.*)

DAI : Busy, Lewis ?

LEWIS : No. Only chatting. Any news ? Come in.

(*Enter* DAI *and* TWM. DAI MATTHEWS *is a young man, plainly dressed.* TWM POWELL *is a collier, in his best clothes. He wears a red neck-tie.*)

DAI : We wanted to see you on a bit of business, Lewis.

LEWIS : Oh ? Anything important ? (*He gets up.*)

TWM : Aay, Lewis, most important. Some more of their damned capitalist tricks ; that's what's the matter.

GWILYM : Well, if you've got business, we won't interrupt you. (*He gets up, leaving 'Cymru' on the table.*) Come and have a look at my new sweet-peas, John Henry. I meant to cut a few of those King Edward the Sevenths.

JOHN HENRY (*rising*) : Right you are !

DAI : How are they getting on in this hot weather, Gwilym ? I see old Roberts has got a fine show of them down there at the crossing.

GWILYM : Yes ; but the drought's spoiling them —especially his White Spencers. He's asked me to go down and see them in the morning. (*Going towards back-kitchen.*) Come on, John Henry !

SAM (*taking up his newspaper*) : 'Arf a mow, boys. I'm aht o' this ere' conspiracy, tew. A man with one awm cawn't afford ter git mixed up in such affairs. It's as much as my job would be worth. Ta, ta ! (*He follows the others through kitchen.*)

LEWIS : Sit down. Now what is it ?

(LEWIS *takes the arm-chair.* TWM *takes the chair by the window,* DAI *that to the left of dresser.*)

TWM : I'll tell you what it is, Lewis, they're trying to trick us working-men that they've been exploiting all our lives.

LEWIS (*turning to* DAI, *as if used to* TWM'S *outbursts*) : Well ?

DAI : The masters are going to run up a special train to-morrow with two hundred blacklegs—

LEWIS (*rising*) : What ?

DAI : Yes. We had word to-day from Cardiff.

TWM : It makes me sick to think there are men in the country to-day will take the gold of the capitalist to betray their fellow-workers !

LEWIS : Dai, those blacklegs are not to come in.

DAI : And what's more, the soldiers in the next valley have been shifted up. They're only just over the hill—

LEWIS : Soldiers or no soldiers, those blacklegs are not to come in.

TWM : Soldiers ? Tools in the hands of the privileged classes, grinding down the—

DAI : What's to be done, Lewis ?

LEWIS (*pacing the room*) : There's a lot to be done, Dai. If those blacklegs come in, they'll break the strike.

DAI : Yes, I know.

LEWIS : It would be fatal to the whole cause for us to be beaten here. Aberpandy gave the lead. Whoever else gives in, we've got to go on to the bitter end.

DAI : And then, there's the bye-election coming off. It would cost Pinkerton hundreds of votes if the strike was to be broken here—

TWM : Of course ! Of course ! It's hopeless if he can't keep his own district loyal.

LEWIS : Look here. There's only one thing to do. Get them to wire from Cardiff telling us what time the train starts. Then we'll call a demonstration up here on Bryndu an hour or so before the train gets to Aberpandy. It will have to slow up at the crossing—

TWM : Dyna fe ! I see ! Da iawn ! And then we can get the men down to the crossing and pull the blacklegs off the train—

LEWIS : Yes. We've only got to close the gates—

DAI : It's risky, Lewis—and the soldiers only over the hill.

LEWIS : But you know what blacklegs are ! They nearly always give in when they see a crowd—

TWM : Anyhow, a bit of a row won't do much harm neither. It's time the public was shown that organized labour is a power in the land.

DAI : You're sure it's worth it, Lewis ?

LEWIS : It's worth everything. Don't you see it's worth everything ? If we let them beat us now, it's the beginning of the end. You can't expect a strike like this to be a Sunday School tea-party. You're not weakening, Dai ?

DAI : No, I'm not weakening. I've taken my side with the working-men here. It looks as if it may cost me my job in school. But I'll stick to my side. Don't be afraid.

LEWIS : Good boy, Dai. We must see the Committee to-night.

DAI : If you'll take my advice, Lewis, you'll keep out of this. I've had a tip that the police have got their eye on you because of the speeches you've been making. If they see you organizing this, they'll be sure to think there's something in the wind ; and that would spoil all.

LEWIS : Aay, p'raps you're right.

DAI : They're watching you closely now. You're a marked man.

TWM : You'd better leave the demonstration to Dai and me. It'll be all right. I'll make a speech.

DAI : If they think there's trouble brewing, they'll have the soldiers over at once. Now, if you, Lewis, were to lie low until the last moment—

TWM : We'll work it up. Leave that to me !

DAI : And then slipped down to the crossing and made an appeal to the blacklegs to go away without causing trouble—

TWM : Duck the devils in the river, I would !

LEWIS : Right, Dai ! Your way's the right one. There's no need to make a row if we can avoid it. Look here. I'll stay in till you send for me, shall I?

DAI : Yes, that will be best. We'll take that as fixed then ?

LEWIS : Very well.

DAI : There's another matter I want to talk about too. (*He takes out a letter, smiling mysteriously.*)

LEWIS : Oh ? What's that ?

DAI : You know they're going to appoint a miner's agent for the new district they've opened up in Carmarthenshire ?

LEWIS : Yes ?

DAI : Well, Pinkerton's pushing you for all he's worth. It's pretty sure now, he says, that you'll be able to have it for the asking.

LEWIS : He mentioned it to me some time ago, but there was nothing settled then.

TWM : If it had been anybody else but you, I'd have had a shot myself. But, of course, I shouldn't stand a chance against you.

DAI (*giving* LEWIS *the letter*) : There's nothing private in it. I'm glad the opportunity is coming your way. You've always had an ambition to give your whole time to the Labour Movement. Pinkerton says something about starting at once—

LEWIS : At once ? But—

TWM : There's nothing to stop you, anyhow. Don't you be afraid of Aberpandy. There's men here can keep the cause going.

LEWIS : It's Gwilym I'm thinking of. He's going to Australia in five weeks time. I don't like the idea of leaving him, just before he goes. I dare say it could be arranged— I don't want to miss a chance like this—

DAI : Oh, that'll be all right. I'm sure Pinkerton can manage it. I'll drop a line to him to-night—

LEWIS : Of course, if it came to that, I could run up week-ends.

DAI : That'll be all right. Don't you worry !

TWM : It's strange what a soft spot you've all got for Gwilym. You've been a good butty to him, I must say, ever since you were children.

LEWIS : Well, you see, Twm, he's always been the weak one of us three boys, and I got into the habit of looking after him when we were in school.

DAI : He cost you many a fight up there in the British School, did Gwilym. By the way, is it true that John Henry's thrown up the ministry ?

LEWIS : Yes. Things are very much strained between him and the old man because of it.

DAI : Yes, I suppose it's a bit unpleasant. Look here, why doesn't he go away for a bit ? There's the Male Voice Party going up to London to-morrow morning to sing for the strike fund. A good tenor like John Henry would be very useful.

LEWIS : I hadn't thought of that. I'll mention it to him.

TWM : And Gwilym's going for good ?

LEWIS : For some years, anyway.

DAI : It's rather strange. I may be going to Australia about that time, too !

LEWIS (*surprised*) : You ? To Australia ?

DAI : Yes. You know that some of the old brigade on the Council are trying to get rid of me because of the part I've played in the strike ?

LEWIS : Well ?

DAI : They've been raking up some trouble about the registers. If I get the sack, I'm going out to Australia, too. That's the place for a Labour-man.

LEWIS : Are they likely to turn you out ?

DAI : It's touch and go.

TWM : It'll be another case of victimising the friend of the working-man.

DAI : There's a cattle-boat going from Cardiff in five weeks time. Somebody's taking out a breed they want to try in Australia and New Zealand. There's three or four chaps from Aberpandy going to work their passages. It's not difficult work.

LEWIS : Let's hope it won't come to that

DAI (*rising*) : I don't care much if it does. We'd better be off now to call on the Committee. Come on, Twm.

LEWIS : And you'll come for me when you want me in the morning ?

DAI : Yes. P'raps Twm will run up. (*He goes goes towards door, preceded by* TWM.)

TWM : We'll teach them a thing or two. Solidarity, that's what we want. Solidarity of labour !

LEWIS (*taking* DAI *by the arm*) : You won't forget to write to Pinkerton ?

DAI : That'll be all right. (*Patting him on shoulder.*) You've got a great future, Lewis—a great future. If I go to Australia, I'll often think of you. You're bound to make a name for yourself sooner or later.

LEWIS : Diolch i ti, Dai.

DAI : Well, noswath dda nawr.

TWM : Noswath dda, Lewis.

(DAI *and* TWM *go out.* LEWIS *stands for a moment in thought, then goes to the table and takes up the letter given him by* DAI. *As he reads it, he smiles with pleasure. He opens back-kitchen door and*

whistles to those outside. They are heard approaching.)

LEWIS : They're gone now, boys.

(*Re-enter* JOHN HENRY, GWILYM *and* SAM. JOHN HENRY *has a few crimson sweet-pea blooms in his hand.* LEWIS *sits down in arm-chair.*)

GWILYM : Conspirators departed, eh, Lewis ?

LEWIS (*with a little start, which he covers with an affectation of lightness*) : Yes. All gone ! All gone!

GWILYM (*pointing to the letter in* LEWIS'S *hand*) : What have you got there—a list for the guillotine ?

LEWIS : This ? Oh, only a letter ! Bit of business. That's all.

(SAM *and* JOHN HENRY *take the seats they occupied before.* GWILYM *goes to the dresser, and adds the blooms to those already in the vase.*)

SAM : Accordin' ter wot I 'ear, Dai Matthews 'as bin gittin' inter trouble on acahnt of torkin' politics in school an' one thing and another.

LEWIS : He suggested, John Henry, that you might like to join the Male Voice Party. They're going to sing in London, starting to-morrow. They'd be glad of a good first tenor.

JOHN HENRY (*with some eagerness*): Would they, really ?

SAM (*sadly*) : Wish I was a tenor, fust tenor, second tenor, third tenor—any bloomin' tenor ! I'd give a lot ter sit dahn ter a plaite o' fish and chips in Cannin' Tahn agen. I would. Not 'arf !

(LEWIS *is re-reading the letter.*)

GWILYM : Are you home-sick, Sam ?

SAM : It ain't so much bein' 'ome-sick as sick of Aberpandy. Some'ah I ain't at 'ome dahn 'ere. Even the beer don't taiste the same. I've traied it maild ; I've traied it bitter. And I've traied it mixed. (*Cheerfully.*)—But it ain't no good grumblin', is it? Much better to taike things as they come. I think I'll just 'op on to a tram and go dahn to the ' Stag and Pheasant ' for 'arf a bitter.

JOHN HENRY (*to* LEWIS) : D'you think they really want—

GWILYM : You're not seriously thinking of it ?

JOHN HENRY : Well, I wouldn't mind.

GWILYM : You see, there's mother. You've only been here a couple of days. She wouldn't like you to run away at once.

JOHN HENRY : Oh yes ! There's mother, of course.

SAM (*looking towards the window*) : 'Ere they are comin' up the 'ill, and Isaac Pugh with them. I'm goin' ter 'op it—aht through the back. (*Crosses to kitchen door.*) Not a word ter the boss, maind yer ! Well, nows dawkee, boys ! (*He goes out.*)

LEWIS : I'm going out into the garden. I don't want to quarrel with old Pugh again.

(*He goes out. Voices are heard on the road.*)

GWEN (*just outside door*) : Won't you come in for a minute, Isaac Pugh ?

PUGH : Well, indeed, just a minute then, just a minute ! (*Enter* PRICE, GWEN, *and* ISAAC PUGH. *They are all in their best clothes, old-fashioned garments and very worn.* PRICE *is carrying a big tonic sol-fa hymn book.*) They're burying old Jonah Jones to-morrow, and I promised to go up to the prayer meeting there to-night. (*To* GWILYM, *kindly.*)—How are you this evening, Gwilym ?

GWILYM : Pretty well, thank you.

PUGH (*to* JOHN HENRY, *with cold politeness*) : And how are you, John Henry ?

JOHN HENRY : All right, thanks. How are you ?

(PUGH *takes the chair by the window.* JOHN HENRY *takes 'Cymru' from the table and idly turns over the pages. He is obviously somewhat uncomfortable.* PRICE, *after a few quiet words with* GWILYM, *takes the arm-chair, ignoring* JOHN HENRY *altogether.*)

GWEN (*taking off bonnet and cloak*) : Where's Lewis ?

JOHN HENRY : Out in the garden ?

GWEN : Has he got his waistcoat on, Gwilym ? There's no trusting the evenings, however hot it is.

GWILYM : That's all right, mam. He's got it on.

(GWEN *takes up her cloak and bonnet very carefully, and carries them into the parlour.*)

PUGH : Aay. As I was saying, they're burying poor old Jonah to-morrow.

GWEN (*as she comes from parlour*) : Will you stop for a bit of supper, Isaac Pugh ?

PUGH : No, indeed, thank you fawr, Mrs. Price. You see, poor Jonah's wife was a second cousin to my missis ; so it wouldn't look the thing for me not to be there at the prayer meeting.

GWEN : Well, Jonah might have treated her better, poor thing ! But now he's dead and gone, I

s'pose it's only right to paint him whiter than he was. (*To* PRICE.)—Don't you think you'd better put on your every-day coat, John ?

(PRICE *has been sitting with every appearance of grim displeasure on his face. Now and then he glances at* JOHN HENRY *in fierce anger. At* GWEN'S *suggestion, he gets up and takes off his cuffs, which are held together by huge buttons. Then he removes his coat, showing a rough grey flannel shirt. Without a word, he carries the things into the parlour, and, coming back, takes the coat from behind the door.*)

PUGH : If they ask me to offer up a few words, it won't be easy to know quite what to say. He wasn't a full member in Horeb. (*Turning to* PRICE.)—Talking of Horeb, Rees the Top Shop and Powell the Stockings were telling me in the vestry to-night they're pretty sure Jones of Dowlais will get the vote in the Church Meeting.

PRICE : I dare say. (*He sends a look of rage towards* JOHN HENRY.)

PUGH : And if he gets it—mind you, I don't say he will—

PRICE : He'll get it—now ! (*He sends another look towards* JOHN HENRY.)

GWEN (*trying to change the subject*) : Who's preaching with us next Sunday ?

PUGH : Well, indeed, now you come to ask, I think it's our William Ewart is there next Sunday.

GWEN : Oh yes ! William Ewart ! Of course, if we are spared, we shall be sure to come to hear William Ewart, morning and evening. (*She looks at* JOHN HENRY, *and turns away stifling a little sigh.*)

PUGH : Don't you go out of your way, Mrs. Price. Well, I must be off now, indeed. (*With a touch of triumph.*)—I suppose if I don't see you before, Price, you'll be at the Church Meeting on Tuesday ?

(PRICE, *goaded by all this, flashes round to give an angry reply, but is anticipated by* GWEN.)

GWEN (*quickly*) : Oh yes, of course. We shall be there for sure—both of us.

PUGH : Well, good night now. Good night, all of you. (*He goes out.*)

(*There is a short pause.* PRICE *looks hard at* JOHN HENRY, *who is pretending to read.* GWILYM *is watching his father with considerable apprehension.*)

GWEN : Well, I'm glad I asked him to stop to supper, and I'm glad he didn't stop. Nobody can say we owe the Pughs anything. (*She goes towards the*

back-kitchen, but is stopped by the tone of her husband's next words).

PRICE (*in a cold, hard voice*) : I didn't see you in chapel to-night, John Henry.

JOHN HENRY : No, I wasn't there, nhad.

PRICE : Wasn't there ? And first Sunday in the month, too ?

JOHN HENRY : I didn't feel like it.

GWILYM : It's rather close this evening, nhad. (*He goes towards fireplace.*)

PRICE : There's plenty of room in Horeb now. You needn't be afraid of that—

GWEN : Would you like to have your supper now, John ?

PRICE (*without noticing her*) : I suppose you think it's a very clever thing to have everybody talking about you like this ?

JOHN HENRY : About me ?

PRICE : Yes ; the deacons and the members. D'you think they don't talk ? Haven't I been working all this time to keep Jones of Dowlais out of Horeb ? And here you are—my own son—ten times worse than him. D'you think I don't know what they're saying behind my back ?

JOHN HENRY : I'm sorry, 'nhad ; but I can't help it. (*With an air of being tired of the whole matter, he gets up and crosses towards the window, where he stands looking out.*)

GWEN (*advancing towards table*) : Nawr, John, nawr ! You musn't go on like that. He wouldn't have given it up if he didn't think it was right. After all, there's no disgrace in it—not really, John ! It's only the foolishness of people's talk. And he'll go in for the teaching. A clever boy like him can easily get into an intermediate ; and you can't deny, John, it's nearly as respectable as being a preacher.

PRICE : He's chosen his own way. It makes no difference to me now what that way is—

GWEN : John !

GWILYM : 'Nhad ! 'Nhad !

PRICE : One thing I know—he'll never touch another penny of my money.

JOHN HENRY (*hotly*) : And he'll never ask for it, either !

GWEN : John ! John ! Don't be hard on him—

JOHN HENRY : It's all right, mam—

GWEN : He's only a boy after all, and he didn't understand. He's very sorry if he's upset your

plans about Horeb. You are sorry, aren't you, John Henry ?

PRICE : Plans for Horeb ? He's upset more than my plans for Horeb. (*To* JOHN HENRY.)—Haven't we been slaving and sacrificing all these years ? Haven't we given you education when you might have had to go to pit ? Haven't we done all we could —books, clothes, and all the rest ? And what was it all for ? To have you turn out an unbeliever at the end of all !

GWEN : No. He's not an unbeliever. You're not an unbeliever, are you, John Henry ?

JOHN HENRY (*wearily*) : But 'nhad, 'nhad ! Can't you understand ? Can't you see ?

PRICE : I can see that you've turned your back on the religion you've been brought up in. I can understand that you despise the faith of your father and your mother—

JOHN HENRY : Despise ? I—despise your faith ? Why, good heavens, it's the one thing I envy you !

PRICE : If you don't despise it, why have you given it up ? Answer me that.

GWILYM : But, 'nhad, does he despise your coat because it doesn't happen to fit him ?

PRICE (*not unkindly*) : Now, Gwilym, don't you interfere.

GWEN (*eagerly*) : Yes, yes. Speak your mind you, Gwilym bach !

GWILYM : You mustn't be unjust to John Henry, 'nhad. (*He goes to chair right of table.*)

PRICE (*to* GWEN) : There you are, he's turning Gwilym against me now—

GWILYM : No, 'nhad, no !

PRICE : He is, I tell you. He wants to make you like himself. It's the way with all these unbelievers. They're at it now down there by the bridge—

JOHN HENRY : But surely, if you're allowed to preach what you like—

PRICE : Oh yes ! You can argue, I dare say. If I'd let you go to the pit instead of sending you to school and college—

JOHN HENRY (*with irritation*) : Yes, but you sent me to school and college—

PRICE (*raising his voice*) : And whose money kept you in school ? Whose money helped to keep you in college ? I'd rather have thrown it into the river.

JOHN HENRY : I'm not sure it wouldn't have been better.

GWEN : Now, machan-i !

PRICE : That's your gratitude, is it ? That's the thanks I get for all these years—and the extra turns I worked because of you.

JOHN HENRY (*bursting out angrily*) : Oh, I'm sick of it all, sick of struggling against what can't be conquered, sick of being badgered and bullied by people too dull to understand ! I tell you I couldn't help it. Why don't you let me alone ? I took the honest course where it was easy to play double. You make no allowance for that. You wanted a preacher in the family. It flattered your pride. That's what you're thinking of now. You don't care about me and the Hell on earth I've had over all this. You wouldn't care if I sold myself ten times over—

GWEN (*frightened*) : Now, John Henry bach, you mustn't talk like that—not to your father—

PRICE : So it's come to this, has it ? (*With cold restraint.*)—If my eye offends me, I can pluck it out—

GWILYM (*rising*) : 'Nhad !

JOHN HENRY (*with the same cold restraint*) : What d'you mean ?

PRICE : I mean that I've done with you—for ever !

GWEN (*with a gasp of terror*) : No ! No ! John, he's our child—

PRICE : He's mine no longer.

GWEN (*rushing to* JOHN HENRY) : Don't you listen to him ! Don't you listen to him ! It's only because he's in a temper about Jones of Dowlais—

JOHN HENRY (*who has not turned his eyes from* PRICE'S *face*) : So you've done with me ?

PRICE : Yes.

GWEN : But I don't care, 'nghariad-i ! I don't care about you giving up the ministry. I'm your mother ; that's all I care about, and if you're an unbeliever, it's the same you are to me, boy bach.

PRICE : Gwen, do you put your children before your God ?

GWEN (*in a low voice*) : Even before my God !

PRICE (*to* JOHN HENRY) : You've brought a curse on the house. Get out of my sight !

GWILYM (*advancing towards his father*) : Think what you're doing, 'nhad !

PRICE : He's taken my money from me. He's robbed me of my rest. He's no better than a common thief !

JOHN HENRY : I'm going. I've suffered enough. (*He seizes his hat and opens the door.*)

GWILYM : No, no ! It will blow over !

GWEN : But what about me ? D'you hear, both of you ? What about me ?

(JOHN HENRY, *looking towards his mother, softens a little. Then, looking towards his father, he grows hard again, and, with a savage exclamation, he goes out, banging the door.* GWILYM *sinks into his chair and covers his face with his hands, evidently suffering a shock.* GWEN, *after a moment of helplessness, turns furiously on her husband, and* GWILYM *jumps to his feet, clutching the chair for support.* LEWIS, *anxious and astonished, appears in the doorway of the kitchen.*)

GWEN (*to* PRICE, *vehemently*) : You've driven him away. You brute ! You wicked, cruel brute !

GWILYM (*swaying to and fro*) : I can't stand it. I can't stand—

(*He collapses, fainting, on to the arm-chair.* GWEN, LEWIS, *and* PRICE *hurry towards him.*)

GWEN : Duw mawr ! He's bad. Lewis, run for the doctor. Quick, Lewis, quick !

LEWIS (*loosening* GWILYM'S *clothing*) : **He's fainted ; that's all.** (*To* PRICE.)—**Get some water.** (*To* GWEN.)—**Open the door, mam.**

(GWEN *opens the door.* PRICE *hastens into the kitchen and returns with a glass of water, which* LEWIS *puts to* GWILYM'S *lips.*)

PRICE (*as* GWILYM *stirs*) : **He's coming round.**

LEWIS : Yes, he's coming round.

(*All the differences between the three have, for the moment, disappeared, as they stand around* GWILYM *in equal solicitude. Then* GWILYM *opens his eyes and smiles faintly.*)

PRICE (*tenderly*) : **Better now, Gwilym bach ?**

GWILYM : Where is he—our John Henry ?

(*The little interlude of sympathy ends with the question.* LEWIS *turns to his father with a hard, enquiring gaze, beneath which the old man shrinks a little.* GWEN, *looking through the window, begins to cry quietly.*)

GWEN : He's going down to the crossing. And he hasn't looked back ! He hasn't looked back !

Curtain.

CHANGE.

ACT III.

Monday Morning.

SCENE: The same.

The table has been drawn out towards the middle of the room. Breakfast is just over. GWILYM, SAM, *and* LEWIS *are seated in their usual places during meals. There is a short spell of silence.* GWILYM, *as if thinking of the previous evening, sighs quietly and shakes his head.* LEWIS, *labouring under suppressed excitement, moves uneasily on his chair, sending occasional glances towards the window. Dressed in his working clothes,* SAM *is reading the 'Daily Mail' as he smokes his morning pipe, at peace with all the world. The old red flag stands against the side of his chair.* GWEN *enters with a small tray holding cup, saucer, plate, etc. She places the tray on the table, and looks about her in a troubled way. Her manner betrays a mind heavily burdened. She has a trick of sighing softly to herself.*

SAM (*trying to be cheerful*) : Well, missis, yer'll 'ave Lizzie Ann back with yer this mornin', eh ?

GWEN (*arranging some crockery on the dresser*) : Yes, I hope so, Sam.

SAM : She's a useful kaind o' gel is Lizzie Ann, and no nonsense abaht 'er. I dare say she'll be glad ter be back. 'There's no plaice like 'ome '—as the song sez.

GWEN : It's a sad home she's coming back to.

SAM : Cheer up, missis ! Cheer up ! We ain't dead yet—none of us.

GWEN (*cutting bread and butter for the small plate on the tray*) : If anybody had told me, I wouldn't have believed it. Turning him out like that—and on a Sunday night, too ! There's thirty years we've been living up here on the Twmp, always as tidy and respectable as the best of them. What the neighbours will be saying I hardly dare to think.

SAM : There's no need ter tell 'em, missis !

GWEN : No. They know already, Sam.

SAM : Know ? 'Ah do they know ?

GWEN : Neighbours always know, Sam.

(*Knock at door.*)

GWEN : Come in.

(*Enter* JINNIE PUGH, *a little girl of twelve or thirteen. She is carrying 'The South Wales Daily News.' All bid her good morning.*)

JINNIE : Please, Mrs. Price, here's the paper from father. And please, has Mr. Price finished with 'Cymru'?

(*She gives the paper to* MRS. PRICE, *who gives it to* GWILYM. *He takes out some inside sheets and passes the rest to* LEWIS.)

GWEN : Yes. It's here somewhere. (*She looks about the dresser.*)

LEWIS (*hastily scanning the sheets*) : D'you see anything there, Gwilym, about the new district they're forming in Carmarthenshire?

GWILYM : I'll have a look.

LEWIS : Or about a strike—you know, the blacklegs?

SAM : I see in the 'Mile' (Mail) 'ere there's been some trouble dahn Swansea way. Three p'licemen in the 'orspital. But, arter all, p'licemen is only p'licemen.

LEWIS : Nothing very special here. I hope there'll be no trouble in our valley.

SAM : If there is, I 'ope the authorities will taike a pretty strong laine—with orl jew respect ter you, Lewis. O' course, I don't say anythin' agen knockin' a p'liceman abaht nah and then—but no extremes—that's wot I sez—no extremes !

(*The men read in silence.*)

GWEN (*finding the magazine*) : Yes. Here it is, Jinnie fach. (*She gives the copy of 'Cymru' to* JINNIE.)

JINNIE : And please, Mrs. Price, will you ask Mr. Price if he will open the prayer meeting to-night, because father is going down to Treforest with our William Ewart.

GWEN (*with the usual touch of hostility*) : Oh ? William Ewart ? (*Overcome by curiosity.*) Is there anything the matter ?

JINNIE (*proudly*) : They're having the big meetings in Salem, and one of the preachers is taken ill ; and they've sent for our William Ewart to preach down there to-night. He's going on his holidays this week.

GWEN : Where to, Jinnie ?

JINNIE : Llandrindod Wells.

GWEN : Oh ! Going to stay with his Aunt Marged, I s'pose ?

JINNIE : No, though she sent him an invite ; but —(*proudly.*)—he's going to stop in a boarding-house.

GWEN (*impressed in spite of herself*) : Is he ? He'll be there for a week or ten days ?

JINNIE : A fortnight. He's preaching in Builth the second Sunday. (*She makes a movement as if to go.*)

GWEN : Well, I'll tell Mr. Price about the prayer meeting as soon as I take him his breakfast. He hasn't got up yet. He isn't feeling very well this morning. Will you have a round cake before you go ?

JINNIE : Thank you.

(MRS. PRICE *gives her a cake, and she goes towards the door.*)

ALL : Good morning, Jinnie.

JINNIE : Good morning, Mrs. Price. Good morning, all. (*She goes out.*)

GWEN : William Ewart, indeed ! They must be getting very hard up in Treforest !

GWILYM (*laying down the paper*) : But, mam fach, you musn't blame him. It isn't his fault.

GWEN : What did he want to write that letter to his father for ?

GWILYM : Well, how would you feel if John Henry hadn't written to you ?

GWEN : There was plenty for William Ewart to write about without bringing in our John Henry.

GWILYM : Father would have to know sooner or later.

GWEN (*stubbornly*) : He was jealous ; that's what was wrong with William Ewart. He knew our John Henry was too clever for him. I know those Pughs, come you, boy bach. And there's John Henry—that was always a king to William Ewart—turned out of house and home. I haven't closed my eyes all night. And now, there he is gone off to London with the Male Voice Party, without so much as a night-shirt.

GWILYM : Don't you worry, mam. We can find out where he is and send some things after him.

GWEN : Can we, Lewis ?

LEWIS : Yes, yes. Of course, that will be all right.

GWEN : I was thinking in bed we might be able to send some things after him. If only he could have

his other suit now, and a couple of shirts and a few collars. It goes to my heart to think of him looking so simple before all the others. You know what a proud spirit he's got. Fair play for you, Gwilym ; you follow my family more. But John Henry is a Price—a proper Price ; and they're all stubborn, the Prices. They're born stubborn ; they live stubborn ; and they die that stubborn they keep hanging on for months.

LEWIS : Dai Matthews will tell us where they're staying in London. We can send a parcel after him this evening.

GWEN : And I'll make some round cakes, nice and fresh, after dinner. He was always fond of my round cakes. I can't help feeling afraid, too, that they'll p'raps be giving him a damp bed. There was Jones the Machine Shop caught his death in a damp bed in London, as his wife will tell you to this day.

SAM : 'E'll be orl raite, missis. Don't yer worry yer 'ead abaht 'im. It'll do 'im good. My stawrs, I'd 'ave gawn pretty quick if I'd 'ad the chawnce—even if it was only goin' rahnd with the 'at ! 'E'll see laife. 'E'll git polish. That's what 'e'll git—polish !

GWEN (*with a touch of dignity*) : He's got polish

enough on him already. Remember you, Sam, he's been down in Cardiff for two years.

SAM (*with profound contempt*) : Cawdiff ? Cawdiff ? Tew bloomin' rileway stations ; that's Cawdiff ! Wite till 'e comes 'ome from London, and 'ear 'im tork abaht it.

GWEN (*the mood of sadness rising again*) : ' Wait till he comes home ! ' Aay, wait ! There's something telling me it's wait I'll have to.

GWILYM : Nonsense, mam fach ! The party's due back inside a month—

GWEN : Ah yes! The party may be. But he's a strange boy is our John Henry. He's like his Aunt Myfanw'. You've only got to look at his nose and chin. He's one of those who remember things for ever. I know his nature. (*Shaking her head with a certain shrewdness in her sorrow.*) I know his nature, machan-i. I've brought him up.

SAM : Tut, tut, missis ! It'll pawss over—sooner or later, laike everythin' else ; and then all will come raite agen.

GWEN (*shaking her head slowly as she gazes into space before her*) : No, Sam. It's no use saying that. It won't come all right again. I heard words in this

room last night that I can never, never forget. The words have been spoken, and nothing can make it as if they had not been said. They go down, deep down into your heart. For a long, long time it seems as if you'd forgotten, but one day they'll come back, when you're sitting by the fire in the evening or doing your work about the house.

SAM : It ain't any use broodin', missis. The world is a 'awrd plaice for them that don't forgit.

GWEN (*in the same tone*) : It's a hard thing for a woman that's getting old to see her own husband and her son standing face to face like that, and so bitter against each other ! (*Trying to shake off her sadness.*) Ah well ! I suppose I'd better take him a bit of breakfast. (*She pauses as she lifts the tray.*) His own son—turned out into the road—like a strange dog !

(*Sighing quietly to herself, she goes off with the tray through the kitchen. There is a short pause, in which the three men stare after her.*)

GWILYM : Poor old mam ! She's living in a little world of her own—

SAM : That's raite. Yer've got it, Gwilym—a little world of 'er own. It's my belief that if she 'ad ter choose between 'ell with you three boys and

'eaven without yer, she'd beg the Almighty's pawdon —and vote for 'ell.

LEWIS (*smiling kindly*) : Of course, she may be a bit narrow in some ways ; but all the same—

GWILYM : Narrow ? Ah yes ! But deep, dangerously deep.

SAM : Nah, I don't 'old with maiking yerself miserable on acahnt of yer children, meself. If yer want ter be 'appy in this 'ere world, yer've got ter keep yer feelin's dahn. Feelin's, if yer let em' go, they're the very devil ; and, Lewis, I'm tellin' yer nah, don't yer forgit it neither. (LEWIS *gets up and goes to door, where he stands for a short time, looking rather furtively up the hill and down towards the crossing. Then he returns to his seat, trying to show interest in* SAM'S *talk, but falling gradually into abstraction.*) Wot I sez is—Don't worry. Tike things easy. As the old song sez, ' Yer 'ere ter-day, gawn ter-morrer.' So why not enjoy yer pot of ile and yer paipe 'o baccy while yer can ? Look at me, nah ! Born in Cannin' Tahn, and knocked abaht the world for years. Then, orl of a sudden, 'appenin' ter 'ave a drop tew much, I gits run over dahn there at the crossin' and loses me awm. I'd no clime for compensaish'n, and the Company offers me a job

at eighteen-and-a-tanner a week carryin' the bloomin' old flag abaht. D'yer think I laike bein' stuck in an 'ole sich as this? It ain't me ambition, I tell yer. But wot's the use o' turnin' yerself insaide aht over wot cawn't be 'elped? Mike yer miserable self 'appy—that's my motter.

GWILYM: That's all very well, Sam. But take my mother's case now. She can't help feeling—

SAM: Look 'ere, me boy. I'll tell yer wot's wrong with this 'ere country of yours—there's a lot tew much feelings abaht for comfort. Nah, d'yer remember Shewni Good-lookin', as yer call 'im? (GWILYM *nods.*) Faine nime ter give a feller, that is! A pal o' mine was Shewni; laiked 'is pot o' beer as much as any man. Then the Revaiv'l come along—the Deewigiad, as yer call it. Next thing I 'eard, Shewni'd been dahn on 'is knees, calling 'isself a miserable sinner, and prayin' I'd be converted from me evil ways—aht lahd, maind yer! Nah, I awsk yer, wot can yer mike of a man laike that? Where is the common sense o' sich goin's on?

GWILYM: But you'll admit that he's been a steady fellow ever since?

SAM: Ow, I don't say nothin' abaht that—

GWILYM : And it was a good thing for his wife and children that it happened ?

SAM : Well, 'e was a waild 'un, and no mistaike. But wot I sez is, where's the common sense of it—goin' dahn on 'is knees and bringin' in my nime laike that ?

GWILYM (*with a smile*) : Ah well, Sam ! It's no use trying to explain. You'd never understand—

SAM (*emphatically*) : I can understand anything that's got plain sense in it, and I don't want ter understand no more.

GWILYM (*teasingly*) : No ?

SAM (*defiantly*) : No !

GWILYM (*sympathetically*) : Hard luck, Sam !

SAM (*confidently*) : Don't yer worry abaht me. I'm orl raite. I can keep my bit o' common sense, thank Gawd ! (*Getting up and taking the flag.*) Well, I suppose I'd better be gittin' dahn ter the crossin' agen. I 'eard some tork of a special bein' run up ter-day. Some of the managers, I expect.

LEWIS (*eagerly*) : What time, Sam ?

SAM : Taime ? I dunno' exactly ; some taime this mornin', I believe. You ain't 'eard anythin', 'ave yer ?

LEWIS : I ? No, no ! (*He turns away in some embarrassment.*) I was only wondering, that's all.

SAM (*looking at him keenly*) : Ow ! (*In a light tone.*)—Well, I'm orf.

GWILYM : Half a minute, Sam. I'm coming down as far as the crossing. (*He goes to the dresser and selects a few white blooms from those in the vase.*) I want to show these White Spencers to old Roberts. He tells me his are in a bad way. I told him all along he'd planted them in the wrong place.

(GWEN *comes in from kitchen with the tray.*)

GWEN : Going out you are, Gwilym ?

GWILYM : Only down to Roberts's, mam.

LEWIS (*with some anxiety*) : Are you going to be long, Gwilym ?

GWILYM : Not if he doesn't start talking about his garden.

LEWIS : If I were you—

SAM (*in the doorway*) : Lot o' people abaht this mornin'. Come on, Gwilym ! (*Over his shoulder.*) —Well, boree dawkee, missis. Boree dawkee.

(*He goes out, followed by* GWILYM.)

GWEN (*beginning to clear the table*) : Your father

wouldn't stay in bed after all. Here he is coming down.

LEWIS : Is he ? (*Taking up the newspapers.*) When—if anybody comes for me, mam, I'll be reading in the parlour.

GWEN : All right.

(LEWIS *goes into parlour.*)

(*Enter* PRICE *from the kitchen, dressed in his week-day clothes, and carrying his boots in his hand. He glances at* GWEN. *There is evidently a strain in their relations. He sits down in the arm-chair and puts on his boots. Without noticing him,* GWEN *begins to clear the table, gathering the things into the tray.*)

PRICE : I've been thinking, Gwen, I'd better go down this morning and see Peters the Insurance about Gwilym's ticket.

GWEN (*distantly*) : Oh !

PRICE : From what they tell me, it will cost an awful lot of money ; but I dare say I can raise a few pounds over what I've got in the Post Office.

GWEN : Yes, I dare say.

PRICE : If it hadn't been for this old strike we

could have managed well enough. (*He looks inquiringly at* GWEN, *as if expecting some remark. She is sighing quietly.*) What's the matter, Gwen ?

GWEN : I'm thinking of our John Henry.

PRICE (*bitterly*) : I've been thinking of him, too —thinking of the words he used to me last night— to me, his father.

GWEN : It's of the words you used to him I'm thinking, John—to him, your son.

PRICE : He was in the wrong.

GWEN : P'raps so. I don't know. But he's our son.

PRICE : I've got my duty towards God as well as my duty towards my children. Have you thought of that ?

GWEN : I'm not afraid of that, John. I think God understands us mothers.

PRICE (*with a little unexpected sadness in his voice*) : Are you going to turn against me, too, Gwen ?

GWEN (*with a sudden movement towards him*) : No, John bach, I don't want to turn against you. It will never be my fault if I do. We've lived here to-

gether, man and wife, for over thirty years. We've seen good days and bad, John, and we've always faced them together. And you've been a good husband to me always. Often and often I've thought of it, when I know of many here in Aberpandy spending their wages in the public, and laying their hands on their wives when they're wild with the drink. You've never raised your voice against me, John, not once since we began walking out together on the road up Bryndu. It's proud of you I've been and proud I've spoken, many and many's the time, amongst the women up here on the Twmp. (*Going slowly towards him with appeal creeping into her voice.*) But there's the children, too, John bach ; there's the children, too. I'm not only your wife. I'm their mother as well.

PRICE (*firmly*) : John Henry was in the wrong, Gwen.

GWEN : No, John. It's you who are in the wrong. You've put shame on him before all Aberpandy. You've sent him away as if he was a drunkard or a thief—

PRICE : An unbeliever isn't so much better—

GWEN : Whatever he is, he's our son—

PRICE (*stubbornly*) : I've done what I think is right !

GWEN : How can you be doing right when you're making me so unhappy ?

PRICE : Unhappy ? D'you think it's a happy man I am to-day, and the great hopes I had all gone to bits ? I haven't been to a Cymanfa Pregethu for the last ten years but that, to myself, I was thinking that one day I might have a boy of my own a great preacher, too.

GWEN (*kindly*) : But it wasn't to be, John. I wanted a son in the ministry, too. But it wasn't to be.

PRICE : I'm only an ignorant collier. I had to go to the pit when I was twelve, and I've suffered for it all my life. I've known what it means to have had no schooling. There's ideas come into my head at times that I can't explain. I struggle and struggle and I'm dumb for want of words. But I made up my mind that my boys should have schooling, if I worked myself to the bone to give it. Lewis didn't have much, it's true, but he was the eldest. And we sent John Henry to college. You know yourself what it meant, and Gwilym so bad. And now, what have we got for it in the end—for all the slaving and hoping, for all these years of waiting ? He's given up the denomination ; he's turned his back on the ministry ; he's denied his God !

GWEN : Oh ! but, John, he's very young. And he's miserable, too. He was reading for hours at night instead of going to sleep. I could see by the candle—

PRICE : Miserable ? I don't wonder. A man without religion can't help being miserable. What would I have done, all these years, without my religion ?

GWEN : I don't know, John. But there's something in me, something I can't explain, that's always hungry if I haven't got the boys about. (*Pleadingly.*) —O John, John ! Isn't it enough that we've got to part with our Gwilym ? Isn't it enough for me to bear that he's going away—thousands and thousands of miles away, and it's somebody else will be looking after him and seeing to his things ? When you're working in the pit, I'll have to be here going about the house, where he was always with me ; and all day long I'll be thinking of him, and him so far away, fighting for his life with the water between us ! It's hard enough on me as it is, John bach. Don't you go and make it harder.

PRICE : What do you want me to do ?

GWEN (*insinuatingly*) : Well, you know, John, you know how stubborn our John Henry is. He

can't help it, poor boy ! It's born in him. You've said yourself he's got Myfanw's nose and chin—

PRICE : Well ?

GWEN : Well, I was thinking, John, that you might write him a letter saying you are sorry—

PRICE : Me ? Sorry ?

GWEN (*quickly*) : Yes, John, you mustn't say no. If you don't, he'll never come back again till one of us is on our death-bed. It won't cost you anything to write a letter—only a few words, John !

PRICE : So it's I am in the wrong, Gwen ?

GWEN : But John, John, what does it matter who's in the wrong so long as he comes back ?

PRICE (*with cold determination*) : I won't write. Not a word !

GWEN (*drawing back a step with a note of warning in her tone*) : John !

PRICE (*gravely*) : It's come to this. Gwen—are you going to let the children divide us, after all these years ?

GWEN (*frightened by his tone*) : No, John bach, don't say that. I don't want anything to divide us. I want you all—you, and John Henry, and Lewis,

and Gwilym. I want you all. And, O John, I want us all to be quiet and happy together, just as we used to be long ago. Don't you remember, John bach, how happy we were here when they were little ?

PRICE (*bitterly*) : It's lucky we couldn't see the future !

GWEN : There was Lewis in the Infants down at the British School, and John Henry hanging on to the chairs all day long as I went about the house—you know he didn't learn to walk so quick as Lewis ; and there was Gwilym only a baby, with such big wondering eyes—d'you remember ?

PRICE : Poor Gwilym !

GWEN : And then, as things went on, you'd be teaching them their verses for Sunday, in the evenings when you'd washed all over, after the work was done. And, sometimes we'd sit here talking over what they were going to be.

PRICE : I did my best for them, Gwen. I've always done my best.

GWEN : And once you took Lewis to Pontypridd to see Gladstone—do you remember, John ?—and held him on your shoulder for nearly two hours. Happy days they were, John—the happiest days of all. And all the time I was wishing for them to

grow up. That's the foolishness of us women, and we're all the same. When we've got our children for our very own—even then we're not satisfied, and when they've grown beyond us, we want them as they used to be !

PRICE : We didn't think then there would be such a disappointment.

GWEN (*with mild rebuke*) : Disappointment ? Well, there's few people in Aberpandy who've got more right to be proud of their children—taking them through and through.

PRICE : There's not much room to be proud of Lewis that I can see ; and,—(*bitterly.*)—when I think of John Henry, I wish he'd never been born!

GWEN : Can't you understand, John, whatever he's done, he's our boy still ? If he'd stolen money or told lies—aay, if he'd killed a man with his own hands, he's our boy still ; and that's beyond all changing. (*A pause.*) You will write to him, John ?

PRICE : No.

GWEN (*looking at him with a little frown*) : You're a hard man, John !

PRICE : I'm following my conscience.

GWEN : If you loved him as you ought to, you wouldn't think of your conscience.

PRICE : It's not an easy thing for a man to send his son from his own house. It's not an easy thing, I tell you, for him to walk about the streets and know he's had to do it.

GWEN : You won't write to him, John ?

PRICE : No.

GWEN : Take care, John ! Take care ! If you let him go like this, I'll never forgive you.

(*For a moment they face each other, neither flinching.*)

PRICE : So it's come to this !

GWEN (*with quiet menace*) : Don't drive me, John ! (*Seeing him shake his head sadly, she melts at once, and adds in a tremulous whisper*)—O John, don't drive me !

(*There is a knock at the door. Without waiting for an answer,* LIZZIE ANN *enters.* GWEN *immediately assumes her normal manner, as if anxious to hide her troubles, even from* LIZZIE ANN. LIZZIE ANN *is a woman in middle life, and of an appearance that suggests more industry than intelligence. She is dressed in her best clothes, sufficiently humble.*

In one hand she carries a small dilapidated dress-basket ; in the other a few roots wrapped up in paper.)

LIZZIE ANN : Well, modryb, here I am—back again.

PRICE (*kindly*) *:* I hope you enjoyed yourself down there in Llantrisant, Lizzie Ann.

LIZZIE ANN : Oh yes, famous, thank you, ewyrth! And I've brought back a few roots for Gwilym—

GWEN : How is your sister Morfydd, Lizzie Ann ?

LIZZIE ANN (*putting the roots on the dresser, then removing her coat and hat*) : Better than I expected, modryb, much better. Such a nice little home she's got there, you wouldn't believe—three rooms up and three down, counting the scullery. (*She takes her coat and hat to the back-kitchen door, and hangs them up very carefully.*)

GWEN : Have you had breakfast, Lizzie Ann ?

LIZZIE ANN : Oh yes, thank you. I was thinking on the way up, before I met Mrs. Howells the Pop Shop, I'd better change, and start the washing at once. (*Casually.*)—Is there a meeting this morning ? There were a lot of men coming down Bryndu towards the station—

GWEN : I'm afraid, Lizzie Ann, we'll have to put off the washing till to-morrow.

LIZZIE ANN : Wash on a Tuesday, modryb ?

GWEN : I haven't put out the things.

LIZZIE ANN : Well, tan i marw ! We haven't done the washing any day but Monday—not since Gwilym was born. (*She gives* PRICE *a side-glance of curiosity.*)

GWEN : I—I've been upset, Lizzie Ann.

LIZZIE ANN (*with another glance at* PRICE) : Oh ! Modryb fach !

PRICE : I think I'll go down to see Peters about the ticket, Gwen.

GWEN : All right.

(PRICE *takes his hat and opens the door. A sound of voices going down the hill is heard, and, in the distance, a confused hubbub.* PRICE *looks out as if puzzled, and, muttering, 'What's the matter?' he goes out. From time to time during the dialogue between* GWEN *and* LIZZIE ANN, *the noise is heard again, not loudly, however, for both door and window are closed.* GWEN *takes her knitting from the dresser.*)

LIZZIE ANN (*casually as* PRICE *goes out*) :

There's no end to them and their old meetings ! (*Eagerly as soon as the door is closed.*)—What is it, modryb ? What's he been doing to John Henry ? I met Mrs. Howells the Pop Shop down by the station, and she said he'd turned him out of house and home.

GWEN (*with dignity*) : H'm ! So Mrs. Howells the Pop Shop has got hold of it, has she ?

LIZZIE ANN : Well, you know, modryb fach, how neighbours will talk ! If we're not going to wash to-day, I suppose I may as well do a bit on the brass. (*Goes into kitchen and speaks.*)—Is it true he turned John Henry out because of him taking to drink ? (*She comes back with an apron and things for polishing. She takes candlesticks from mantelpiece and rubs.*)

GWEN (*indignantly*) : Drink ? Our John Henry drink ? Is that what's going about the place ?

LIZZIE ANN : No, not exactly, modryb. But Mrs. Howells was saying that, once you send a young man to college, there's no knowing. Not that I see much harm in a glass of beer myself—

GWEN : Well, next time you see Mrs. Howells the Pop Shop, you can tell her from me that she'd better be careful of what she's saying. Who is she to

start talking about us, I'd like to know? Why, it's a disgrace the way she lets them poor children go out on a Sunday! It's coming to something when people like us are being talked of by a woman like Polly Howells! Why! you know yourself, Lizzie Ann, her father was only a rag-and-bone man living down a gwli! (*In her quiet way, she is, just now, a picture of outraged self-respect.*)

LIZZIE ANN: From what she was saying, John Henry's given up studying for a preacher, after all?

GWEN: He's changed his mind; that's all, Lizzie Ann. It's very likely now he'll be going in for the teaching. And a very respectable position, too; especially if he goes into the intermediate.

LIZZIE ANN: Oh yes! I don't deny. There's Willie Meredith now, son of Meredith the Bread. Wears a box-hat every Sunday, so they do say.

GWEN: I'm not saying that John Henry and your uncle didn't have a few words; but there's no need for people to talk—especially some people! I dare say your uncle will write to him one of these first days. And, next time you see that Polly Howells, you can tell her that John Henry has gone to London for a bit of a holiday with the choir. (*Pronounced 'koyer.'*)

LIZZIE ANN : Oh, I'll let her know, come you! True or not, I'll let her know.

GWEN : And if you just reminded her who she is, and where she came from, there wouldn't be so much harm done either.

LIZZIE ANN : But one thing I must say for her, whatever—she spoke very kind about of my sister Morfydd. Nothing would do but I must tell her all about the house. And it is a nice little home, there's no denying, clean as a pin in paper, upstairs and down, and our Morfydd mistress of it all, and as proud the Queen of England !

GWEN (*quietly and smiling to herself*) : Ah yes ! I know. (*A pause.*) What is she hoping for—a boy or a girl ?

LIZZIE ANN : Well, indeed, one day one thing and next day another. Of course he's all for a boy. I'm hoping it's going to be a boy myself, and then they can name him Daniel Richard after the two grandfathers—

GWEN : I don't know. I don't know, indeed ! You haven't got the same hold on boys when they grow up—

LIZZIE ANN : No. That's true, of course—

GWEN : There's work to be done ; and one goes here and another goes there—

LIZZIE ANN : Have your heard any more from your sister-in-law in Australia ?

GWEN : Yes. We had a letter just after you went to Llantrisant. It's fixed now that Gwilym will go in five weeks time.

LIZZIE ANN : Diwedd annw'l ! Five weeks ? So soon as that ? (*She stops work in order to digest the news.*)

GWEN : Doctor Willie Jenkins says it will be the making of him—

LIZZIE ANN : What the house will be like without him, I don't know.

GWEN : And in a few years he'll be coming back strong and well. I'm almost afraid to believe it, Lizzie Ann. I'm almost afraid to believe I'll ever see him strong and well. If only God will spare me till that day—how glad I'll die !

LIZZIE ANN : He's been a good boy to you, modryb.

GWEN : Yes. He's been a good boy to his mother. So have they all. Lewis and John Henry too ; they've all been good to their mother. But

Gwilym's always been home here with me, and they've been busy with one thing and another—

LIZZIE ANN : Yes. Gwilym's different somehow. I know what you mean. Whatever you say or don't say, Gwilym always understands. If he was my boy, the wind shouldn't blow on him. It won't be so easy to part with him—when the time comes.

GWEN (*tremulously*) : No. But we must try not to lose heart, Lizzie Ann, and then Myfanw' will be sure to be kind to him. She's got no children of her own.

LIZZIE ANN : No, I know. I never thought much good would come of that barman. (*A pause.*) Suppose now, modryb, he was never to come back.

GWEN (*sharply*) : Never come back ? Don't talk so foolish, Lizzie Ann ! Of course he'll come back.

LIZZIE ANN : His Aunt Myfanw' didn't come back. (*Struck by a sudden fear,* GWEN *lets her knitting drop.*) I was thinking she might take to him altogether and leave him her money after her days. And, again, he might get married out there—

GWEN (*rising*) : What d'you mean, Lizzie Ann ? You think she'll try to turn him from me and keep him to herself ?

LIZZIE ANN (*apologetically*) : I was only thinking, modryb ; that's all.

GWEN (*with agitation*) : He wouldn't do it. He wouldn't do it, I tell you. I'm his mother. He'll always love me best of all.

LIZZIE ANN : I only meant—well, you know what boys are—how they grow up and forget.

GWEN (*with vehemence*) : But he won't forget. What does it matter about the others ? I never heard such nonsense as you're talking, Lizzie Ann—never in all my life.

LIZZIE ANN : But, modryb fach, I was only just saying—

GWEN : All the same, I'll have to think it over. She might do it. She's just that sort of woman—so strange and full of feeling. She's hungry to have children about her. I know, I know ! But she shan't have mine—not our Gwilym. He shan't go if it comes to that—

LIZZIE ANN : But you—

GWEN : No. He shan't go. (*Turning fiercely on* LIZZIE ANN.) And you're a wicked woman, Lizzie Ann, to be putting such thoughts into my head !

LIZZIE ANN (*injured*) : Wicked ? Me wicked ?

GWEN : I'll talk to his father. We can write another letter—

LIZZIE ANN : And how about his health, poor boy—

GWEN : We must find some other way. Something must be done. I—I—I— (*She bursts into tears and drops into the arm-chair, her power of resistance broken once again.*) I want to keep him, Lizzie Ann ! If he was to turn to Myfanw'—it would break my heart.

LIZZIE ANN (*melting at once*) : There you ! There you now, modryb fach ! I didn't think ; that was all.

GWEN : And you said he might get married—

LIZZIE ANN : Twt ! Twt ! We haven't even heard of a sweetheart yet.

GWEN : You can venture it would be somebody not half good enough for him. You know what the girls are to-day !

LIZZIE ANN : There's plenty of time before thinking of that.

GWEN : If he'd let me choose her for him, I wouldn't mind so much—

LIZZIE ANN : Come you now. Don't you fret like this. It's John Henry going away that's upset you.

GWEN : It wasn't right, Lizzie Ann—what I told you—about John Henry. His father did turn him out.

LIZZIE ANN : Yes. I knew that all the time. (*Cheerfully.*)—Now I'll make a cup of tea in half a minute. (*She clears away the candle sticks, while* GWEN *slowly dries her eyes.*) And we'll have it by here, nice and quiet.

(*The murmur outside rises. There is a great shout.* GWEN *looks up.* LIZZIE ANN *at the mantlepiece turns round quickly.*)

LIZZIE ANN (*going quickly towards window*) : What's that ? (*Looking out.*) Diwedd annw'l, they're down there at the crossing in their hundreds !

(GWEN *rises and goes towards the window.* LIZZIE ANN *goes to the door and opens it. The angry noise of the crowd comes in more loudly.*)

LIZZIE ANN (*starting*) : Duw mawr ! Look !

GWEN (*looking through the window*) : What is it ?

LIZZIE ANN : Soldiers !

GWEN : Where's Lewis ? Oh yes ! In the parlwr. But Gwilym ? Ble mae Gwilym ?

LIZZIE ANN : He'll be safe in somebody's house. Here's your husband and Isaac Pugh coming.

GWEN : What's going on, Lizzie Ann ? I can't see so clear as I used to.

LIZZIE ANN : The soldiers—down there—d'you see ? They're keeping the men back from the gates.

GWEN : They're rushing. Listen !

(*There is a roar of voices.*)

LIZZIE ANN : And they're being driven back. Can you see ? Look ! They're throwing stones again—over the wall before Roberts's house. Duw, Duw ! They've hit one of the soldiers. Look ! look ! His face is all over blood. (*She shrinks.*) Oh, ach !

GWEN : Oh ! Poor man ! Poor man ! And there's two more hurt. D'you see, at the back ?

(*Re-enter* PRICE *with* ISAAC PUGH.)

PRICE : Is Lewis here ?

GWEN : Where's Gwilym, John ? He isn't down there ?

PRICE : He's safe in Roberts's house. Where's Lewis ?

(*Re-enter* LEWIS *from the parlour. He is quivering with excitement.*)

PRICE : Come down to the crossing. Quick !

GWEN : No, Lewis. No ! (*To* PRICE.)—How can you ask him ?

PUGH : We've done our best. They won't listen to us. The soldiers can't stand it much longer.

PRICE : They say you've got most power over the men. Come and use it, for God's sake, before there's murder done !

(*Enter hurriedly* TWM POWELL.)

TWM : It's now or never, Lewis. They've brought the soldiers over the hill. The train's coming up the valley.

LEWIS : I'm coming, Twm. It's got to be stopped.

PUGH : They'll shoot !

TWM : No. They've only got blank ; that's all.

(LEWIS *moves to go. His father stops him.*)

PUGH : They said they'd have to shoot.

LEWIS (*brushing his father aside*) : Then, damn them, let them shoot ! Come on, Twm.

(GWEN *intercepts him on the way to the door, trying to hold him back.*)

GWEN : You shan't go, Lewis ! O boy bach, boy bach, what if they kill you ?

LEWIS (*putting her aside and laughing grimly*) : I shan't be the first. (*He goes out followed by* TWM.)

GWEN (*to* PRICE) : Go after him, John. Don't let them hurt him. He's young and wild, that's all.

PRICE : Come on, Pugh.

(PRICE *and* PUGH *go out together.*)

GWEN (*as they go*) : Don't let them hurt him. (*Wringing her hands.*)—Oh, the trouble that's in the world ! (*She goes to the window.*) Where is he ? Where's our Lewis ?

LIZZIE ANN : There he is, running down the hill.

GWEN : They're throwing stones again. Oh ! Why don't they go home ? Why don't they go home quiet ?

LIZZIE ANN : There's another soldier hurt. Look ! They're dragging him behind.

GWEN : What are they going to do ? Look at him—that one—the leader, talking to the soldier—

LIZZIE ANN : He's going to fire in the air—to warn them. (*Shot without.*)

GWEN : Arglwydd mawr ! They're rushing again.

LIZZIE ANN : There's the train. I can see the smoke down the valley.

GWEN : Look ! Look ! Isn't it Lewis ?

LIZZIE ANN : Yes. There he is in the front—

GWEN : He's climbing the wall by Roberts's house. He's shouting to them. Lewis ! Lewis ! Go down ! (*She bends forward, and gives a frightened shriek.*) There's our Gwilym. Look ! He's on the wall, trying to pull Lewis away—

LIZZIE ANN : There's four soldiers. O Dduw ! Don't look ! Don't look ! They're going to shoot ! (*She drags* GWEN *away from the window. There is a sound of firing without, followed by deep silence. In a whisper*)—They've done it !

GWEN (*pointing to the window*) : Look !

LIZZIE ANN (*shuddering*) : I can't.

GWEN : You must.

LIZZIE ANN : I can't.

(GWEN *wavers a moment, and then forces herself towards the window and looks out.*)

GWEN : They're carrying someone into Roberts's house. It's Lewis. No, there's Lewis ! (*She bends forward ; then in a harsh voice.*)—**Lizzie Ann, come here !**

(LIZZIE ANN *goes quickly to her, and looks out. She starts and turns away, sobbing out, ' O machgen bach-i !'*)

GWEN : Is it—Gwilym ?

LIZZIE ANN : Yes—Gwilym !

(*For a moment,* GWEN *stands swaying to and fro. Then, with a cry of anguish, she falls prostrate on the floor.*)

Curtain.

CHANGE.

ACT IV.

Afternoon of a day five weeks later.

SCENE: The same.

LIZZIE ANN *is at the table, making cake. She is dressed in black. Her sleeves are rolled up to the elbow. Her face is lit up by gladness. She has paused in her work to talk to* SAM, *who, seated in the chair by the window, looks at her with an air of satisfied proprietorship.*

The chair from left of dresser is close to table on left side.

SAM: So that's settled, eh, Lizzie Ann?

LIZZIE ANN: It's kind of you to ask me, Sam.

SAM (*with a touch of condescension*): Ow no! Ow no! Of course, I don't say yer 'aven't got a taidy sort of plaice 'ere, as things go. There's no denyin' it was kaind of 'em ter taike yer in when yer fawther was killed, and orl that. But yer've worked 'awrd for yer keep.

LIZZIE ANN (*resuming her work*) : Well, I suppose, Sam, every woman wants a little home of her own. I've been working hard all my life. And I'm not so young as I was, Sam.

SAM : Well, come ter that, I ain't no chicken, either.

LIZZIE ANN (*with hesitation*) : Somehow, I don't seem to see myself as a married woman—

SAM : I ain't exactly bin 'avin' visions of meself as a married man, either—not till laitly any'ah. But there's sich a lot of funny things bin goin' on this lawst couple o' months, a man maite get married and buried withaht so much as noticin' it. Nah, as I was tellin' yer, I've been offered this 'ere job dahn at the goods-yard in Cwmyglo. It ain't a fortune—twenty-three bob a week ; but it's more than I was gittin'—

LIZZIE ANN : But a woman can make it go a long way—if she's saving, Sam. 'Tisn't the same as if I'd be wanting to send out any of the washing or to have a girl coming in now and then. I know the way to work. That's one thing, whatever !

SAM : And I dare say they'll give me something better later on. It orl comes of stickin' ter the Company in the rileway strike !

LIZZIE ANN : Yes, you were wise there, Sam, though there's many here in Aberpandy were looking so black at you.

SAM : You bet ! I ain't knocked abaht this bloomin' old world for nothin'. Look at Dai Matthews, nah ! 'E's 'ad the push from the Board School. Orl comes of openin' is math tew much.

LIZZIE ANN : Aay, poor feller ! Mrs. Howells the Pop Shop was telling me she'd heard he was thinking of going to foreign parts.

SAM : Yus. Aht to Australia, I b'lieve. Nah, I reckon from wot the foreman tells me, I'll be shifted dahn ter Cwmyglo in abaht five or six weeks ; and we could git married before—

LIZZIE ANN (*agitated by some romantic spasm*) : O Sam, so soon as that ?

SAM : Well, it won't be any use me goin' into lodgin's dahn there. I'd be more comfortable in my own 'ouse. We could git a bit o' furniture on the 'ire system.

LIZZIE ANN : Where were you thinking we'd better go, Sam—to get married, I mean ?

SAM : Well, I was thinkin' of the registry orfice—

LIZZIE ANN : No, Sam bach, not the office—

SAM : But I don't maind so long as we git over it quick, laike. And we might spend the day in Cawdiff, and 'ave a bob's worth at the Empire.

LIZZIE ANN (*still romantic*) : Oh Sam ! I must write and tell our Morfydd.

SAM (*meditatively*) : Yus. It's the best way. I don't want no more lodgin's. Of course, I ain't sayin' nothin' agen me plice 'ere. I've bin comfortable enough in a way of speakin'—

LIZZIE ANN : Yes, I know, I know. But it isn't like having a little home of your own after all, is it, Sam ?

SAM : But this lawst month 'as fair given me the bloomin 'ump ! There's the missis, nah, she gives a feller the blues every taime 'e claps eyes on 'er.

LIZZIE ANN : Oh, but, Sam, it was an awful blow for her—losing poor Gwilym like that. I don't think she'll ever get over it. She was always dull on him, poor boy ; fair dull she was.

SAM : Yus. But wot's the use of worryin' over it ? That's wot I sez, wot's the use o' worryin' ? 'Tain't as if worryin' would bring 'im back.

LIZZIE ANN : But a woman can't help her feelings, Sam. How can she ? I know how it

would be on me, if I was his mother. And then there was John Henry again. Just fancy him going on the stage like that, and brought up so respectable, too !

SAM : My dear gel, the boy 'ad ter earn a livin' same'ah. 'E couldn't stawrve. It ain't orl beer and skittles singin' in the chorus of a mewsical comedy. Couple o' quid a week 'e'll git, I suppose. It ain't so bad, yer know. And the 'stawrs,' they git anythin' up ter a hundred and fifty pahnd a week—

LIZZIE ANN : A hundred and fifty a week ? Cer ona, Sam !

SAM : Fact !

LIZZIE ANN (*reflectively*) : Well, a man can afford to put up a with a bit of disgrace when he's getting a hundred and fifty pound a week for it. Can't he now ? But his father was furious, all the same.

SAM : 'E would be. 'E's narrer-minded. That's wot 'e is. Wot can yer expect of a man brought up in an 'ole laike this ?

LIZZIE ANN : Anyhow, you can be pretty sure John Henry won't show his face here again for years. It's hard on his mother, poor woman ! I don't know what's come over her. It isn't like her to be setting me to make the cake like this. That's the one thing

she would always do herself. And there's she's been, all day long, up in poor Gwilym's room—

SAM : Well, p'raps yer couldn't expect her ter look at it in a proper laite. But there's Lewis nah ! Wot can yer mike of Lewis ?

LIZZIE ANN : Aay. There's a change come over Lewis. It's hard to understand it, but after all, Sam, you mustn't forget Gwilym was his own flesh and blood. It's a pity he hasn't gone back to work like the others. There's no good can come of him moping about all day like this.

SAM : 'E's gittin' on me nerves is Lewis. I cawn't stand it. I tell yer strite this 'ere 'ouse is gittin' as solemn as a church ; and I don't want a church ; I wants a bit o' comfort. Nah there was lawst naite. The old people 'ad gawn ter bed. Lewis come 'ome very laite, and 'e'd bin drinkin' 'awrd—

LIZZIE ANN : It's a pity, Sam, and him such an abstainer as he used to be ; but, when you come to think of it, it isn't such a wonder !

SAM : Well, ter put it in plain English, 'e was clean up the pole was Lewis, and, some'ah, there was a kaind of waild look abaht 'im. I offered him a paipe o' baccy, sociable-laike, and stawrted torkin'

ter 'im in a friendly way ; but 'e didn't tike much notice. Orl of a suddin, up 'e jumps and grips me by the awrm. ' It wasn't my fault,' 'e sez in a 'oarse voice, ' it wasn't my fault. Nobody can say it was my fault.' And I felt 'im tremblin' all over.

LIZZIE ANN : Did you now ! Poor Lewis bach!

SAM : 'E began walkin' abaht. Then 'e stopped, shiverin' agen, and waite as a sheet. ' There's a ghost in the 'ouse,' 'e sez ; ' I'll never 'ave peace any more.' And then—would you believe it ?—before I knew wot ter say, dahn 'e goes on 'is knees by the taible 'ere with 'is 'ead on 'is 'ands, and stawrted prayin'—yus, prayin' and cryin' tergether, and 'arf drunk all the taime. Mide me feel bloomin' uncomfortable, I can tell yer ! I gives it up. I can understand Scotchmen. I've got the 'ang of niggers and Chinamen. But the ways of the Welsh are beyond me—quaite beyond me.

LIZZIE ANN (*ingenuously*) : D'you see something funny about us, then, Sam ?

SAM : Funny ? Ow Lor ! I do ; and, wot's more, I seem ter see the Recordin' Aingel lookin' dahn and scratchin' 'is 'ead pretty 'awrd.

LIZZIE ANN (*listening*) : Here's modryb coming down from Gwilym's room.

SAM : I'm goin' for a turn before tea. There's tew much sorrer in 'er fice for me. (*He goes to the door.*) And, Lizzie Ann, yer'd better tell 'er abaht us—yer know.

LIZZIE ANN (*with a start*) : Oh ! I didn't think of that. I'd forgotten about her. She won't like it, Sam.

SAM : She'll 'ave ter know. Put it as nicely as yer can. So long. (*He goes out.*)

(*The kitchen door opens, and* GWEN *is seen in the doorway, dressed simply in plain black. She is slower and heavier in movement. Her voice is softer and more wistful. Throughout the act, though habit drives her to take up her knitting, she does little more than sit with the work in her hands. She shows only an intermittent interest in what takes place around her, and her mind seems to revert continually to her sorrow. From time to time she sighs quietly, and murmurs to herself. Since* GWILYM'S *death she has aged very much, as if breaking under the burden laid upon her.*)

GWEN : Where's your uncle, Lizzie Ann ?

LIZZIE ANN (*with some surprise*) : He hasn't come down from the pit yet. It isn't time.

GWEN : Where's Lewis ?

LIZZIE ANN : Out somewhere, modryb.

GWEN : Making cake you are ?

LIZZIE ANN : Yes. I thought I'd better get a bit ready.

GWEN : Have you got everything ?

LIZZIE ANN : Yes ; for this lot. But we're getting short of currants. You said you were going to order some more.

GWEN : Yes ? (*Puzzled.*) I'm not quite sure. I ordered something, I know. Did you tell me about the currants ?

LIZZIE ANN : Oh yes ! I'm sure !

GWEN (*going slowly to the dresser and taking up the grocer's books*) : When was it, Lizzie Ann ?

LIZZIE ANN : (*with a glance, half curious, half startled*) : Why, day before yesterday, of course !

GWEN : Oh yes ! Day before yesterday. I was forgetting. No. There's no currants down here. P'raps you'll see to it, Lizzie Ann ?

LIZZIE ANN : All right. And how about bees-

waxing the upstairs ? I've been thinking it would do just as well next Monday—

GWEN : You think it would do just as well next Monday ?

LIZZIE ANN : And I thought that on Saturday I could run down to see our Morfydd. It'll be getting a bit anxious on her now, and her so near her time.

GWEN (*with appeal*) : O, Lizzie Ann fach, don't go away ! I can't spare you, not even for a day. It's so lonely in the house.

LIZZIE ANN (*temporising*) : Well, some day next week, then.

GWEN (*taking her knitting from the dresser drawer, and going to the arm-chair*) : Yes ; next week—next week ! (*There is a pause, during which* LIZZIE ANN *works energetically, while* GWEN *falls into reverie.*) It's to-day he was to go.

LIZZIE ANN : To go ? Who ? (*Remembering.*) —Oh, yes ! Poor Gwilym !

GWEN : I was just breaking my heart only to think of him crossing the water ; and now he's in his grave up there on the hill by Horeb ; and the grass will be growing above him, and I won't see him any more.

LIZZIE ANN : Don't vex, modryb fach. It was the will of God. That's what uncle said—the will of God.

GWEN : God's far away, Lizzie Ann, far away in the Kingdom of Heaven ; but Gwilym was here as I went about the house. There was always a kindness in his voice, and his hands were ready to smooth away all troubles. There's no comfort in your words, Lizzie Ann, no comfort at all.

LIZZIE ANN : Ah well ! P'raps you're right !

GWEN : And there's John Henry gone away—

LIZZIE ANN : He'll be back one of these days.

GWEN : I know him, Lizzie Ann ! I know him !

LIZZIE ANN : You'll see, modryb fach. Wait you !

GWEN : Aay, wait, wait, wait ! But waiting won't bring Gwilym back from his grave by Horeb. Waiting won't blot out the words John Henry and his father said in this room that night. Oh ! If only waiting would make them babies once more, how glad I'd be waiting. That was the happy time, Lizzie Ann—but I never knew. I can't help thinking of your sister Morfydd these last few days. She's got the grand times before her, Lizzie Ann, the same as I had then.

LIZZIE ANN : Yes, she ought to be happy ought our Morfydd, such a nice little home she's got, and him earning regular money.

GWEN : She'll be having children—little children that will be all her own for a long, long time. It's to her they'll be running all day long, and when they're tired, she'll put them to bed and sing them some song she learnt from her mother, till they fall asleep.

LIZZIE ANN (*carried away, whispering*) : Yes, yes ! (*Nervously.*) Modryb ?

GWEN : Well ?

LIZZIE ANN (*hesitating*) : There's something I want to tell you.

GWEN (*without interest*) : What is it, Lizzie Ann ?

LIZZIE ANN : It's about—Sam.

GWEN (*with a keen look*) : Oh !

LIZZIE ANN : They've given him a new job down at Cwmyglo. (*Growing awkward under* GWEN'S *gaze.*) And of course—now that he's getting on in years—he's—he's anxious to settle down.

GWEN (*rising*) : D'you mean to say, Lizzie Ann, it's of that you're thinking—of that—and Gwilym only a month in his grave ?

LIZZIE ANN : But, modryb fach, surely there's no harm in—

GWEN (*bitterly*) : You're like the rest, Lizzie Ann. There's his bed up there empty where he used to lie, but the world's going on just the same. There's men and women walking about the streets, and he's in his grave by Horeb, and they've put his name on a cold white stone. And you, Lizzie Ann—you're like the rest.

LIZZIE ANN : No, modryb, no ! I loved him too, poor Gwilym !

GWEN (*going close to her and searching her face*) : You loved him, too ? No. It's of this man you are thinking. It's there—in your eyes.

LIZZIE ANN : But, modryb, a woman can't help wanting a little home of her own.

GWEN : Aay, poor fools !

LIZZIE ANN : And we'd get married very quiet.

GWEN (*with a quick, bitter laugh*) : Married ? (*Stretching out her arms as if to make herself a figure of warning.*) O Lizzie Ann, look, look !

LIZZIE ANN : Modryb—don't !

GWEN : I've brought you up. Whatever we've got, Lizzie Ann, you'll always have your share.

LIZZIE ANN : But it isn't the same, modryb fach. You know it isn't the same !

GWEN : Well, well ! You must go your own way, Lizzie Ann. I was the same. And what was it all for—the waiting and the hoping and the dreaming ? For nothing ! For nothing at all !

LIZZIE ANN : You've had your troubles, I know. Everybody must have troubles ; but still——

GWEN : For nothing, I tell you ! All the ways of our life have changed as we've just gone on from one day to another. There's something in the world a woman can't understand—something strong and cruel and waiting always. It's a terrible thing, Lizzie Ann, for a woman to live so long and find in the end that there's something stronger than all her love.

LIZZIE ANN : I don't understand what you mean, modryb.

GWEN : Never mind ! Never mind ! (*Glancing at the clock and changing her tone.*) Isn't it time to be laying the tea ?

LIZZIE ANN : Diwedd annw'l, yes ! They're coming down from the pit. (*She takes the things from table into the kitchen, and, returning with the*

crockery, she takes the cloth from dresser drawer and spreads it.)

(*Knock at the door.*)

LIZZIE ANN : Come in.

(*Enter* DAI MATTHEWS *and* TWM POWELL. DAI *is dressed as before.* TWM, *coming straight from the pit, is in his working clothes. He has a 'jack' in one pocket and a 'box' in the other. His face is black with coal dust.*)

DAI : Prydnawn da 'chi, Lizzie Ann. Prydnawn da 'chi, Mrs. Price.

TWM : Shwt ych-chi nawr ?

LIZZIE ANN and GWEN : Prydnawn da !

DAI : Is Lewis in, Mrs. Price ?

GWEN : Not yet, indeed, Dai. But he'll be home before long now. Sit down, you !

(TWM *takes the chair to the left of dresser.* DAI *takes that by the window. He seems rather downcast.*)

TWM : Dai came up to meet me out of work, so we thought we'd look in to see Lewis. He hasn't started work with us others.

GWEN : There's no hurry—no hurry ! You've only begun just over a week.

LIZZIE ANN : He isn't quite up to the mark these last few weeks.

DAI : I've heard he's not looking very well. I haven't seen him for some time myself.

GWEN (*anxiously*) : He's not looking so bad as all that—d'you think, Lizzie Ann ?

LIZZIE ANN (*humouring her*) : No, no ! He's not quite himself ; that's all. (*To* DAI.)—Is it true, Dai, you're going to foreign parts ?

DAI : Yes. I'm going. I've had the sack.

TWM : There'll be a day, though, when the friends of the working-man won't be treated like that.

LIZZIE ANN : Where are you going, Dai ?

DAI : To Australia. (GWEN *starts.*) I'm leaving to-morrow. I thought I'd just call in and say good-bye to Lewis.

GWEN : To Australia ? Did you say to Australia, Dai ? Our Gwilym was going to Australia. Did you hear about it, Dai ? He'd have been sailing to-day. (*She falls into abstraction.*)

LIZZIE ANN (*changing the subject*) : I suppose you're not sorry to be in work again, Twm ? (*Laying the things on the table.*) It's a sad place is Aber-

pandy, when there's no winding on the hill and no black faces coming from Bryndu.

TWM : It's starved back we've been, Lizzie Ann, and the trouble isn't settled like that.

GWEN (*who has not been listening*) : P'raps you've got relations out there ? Our Gwilym was going to his Aunt Myfanw'. Sister to his father she is.

DAI : No, Mrs. Price. I've got no relations out there. I'm going out on a cattle-boat, altogether on chance. Has Lewis said anything about going back to the pit, Mrs. Price ?

GWEN : Not yet, indeed. But there's plenty of time, plenty of time !

TWM : Nor about any other job he had in view—nothing about Carmarthenshire ?

LIZZIE ANN : No. We haven't heard a word.

(DAI *and* TWM *look at each other in surprise.*)

GWEN : There's dozens not gone back yet—dozens.

DAI : Yes, I know. But, if you'll take it in the right spirit, Mrs. Price, I'd say you might drop him a hint all the same. There were many down on him, as they were on me, over the strike ; and they might say he's too lazy—

GWEN (*bridling up*) : **Lazy ? So that's what they're saying now, is it ? There's not a lazy bone in his body. Didn't he wear himself out for them in the strike, from early morning till late at night, and half of them on their backs in bed till dinner ?**

LIZZIE ANN (*who has finished laying the table, and is just going towards kitchen*) : **S—sh ! Here he is !** (*She goes into kitchen.*)

(*Enter* LEWIS. *He is wearing the same suit as before, but with a black necktie, and a band of crêpe on his arm. His face is pale and haggard. His natural restlessness has grown considerably. There is, also, a new element in his manner—a certain feverish furtiveness, in which he looks from one to another, as if racked by suspicion and always on the watch. Seeing* DAI *and* TWM, *he attempts to assume an easy and familiar attitude.*)

LEWIS : Hullo, Dai ? Shw' ma'i, Twm ?

DAI (*looking at him closely*) : **Oh, weddol, Lewis. Weddol !**

TWM : Pretty fair, indeed !

(LEWIS *takes up a position at the back, leaning against the dresser. There is a short and rather awkward pause, in which he looks from* DAI *to* TWM, *and then away through the window.*)

LEWIS : Ah ! Here's Sam !

(*Re-enter* SAM.)

SAM (*in the doorway*) : 'Ullo ! 'Ullo ! 'Ullo ! Shoo duckee haydee, boys ? Gawn back ter work then, Tom ? (*He goes to chair left of table, and, turning it round, sits on it, facing the visitors.*) Well, I thought yer would !

(GWEN, *meanwhile, is watching* LEWIS, *who has begun to smoke a cigarette in his uneasy manner.* LIZZIE ANN *comes in with the loaf.*)

GWEN (*to* LEWIS *in a soothing voice*) : Would you like a nice bit of toast, Lewis, and a boiled egg ?

LEWIS (*scarcely noticing*) : Yes, diolch ! Diolch ! I s'pose there's a good many asking why I've not gone back to work, eh, Twm ?

GWEN : Twt ! Twt ! Never you mind, Lewis ! (*To* LIZZIE ANN.)—Plenty of butter, Lizzie Ann, and mind you not to boil the egg hard.

(LIZZIE ANN *nods and goes out.*)

SAM (*to* DAI) : So they've given it yer in the neck, Dai ? Got the push, 'aven't yer ?

DAI : Yes, I've had to go.

SAM : Goin' abroad, so I 'ear ?

(LEWIS *looks towards* DAI *with new interest.*)

DAI : Yes, I'm leaving to-morrow. I'm going out to Australia.

LEWIS (*eagerly*) : You're going to Australia, Dai ? To-morrow ? Have you got sick of it, too ? Aay ! It's the place where a man could forget things—

DAI : I'm going because I must. Australia's the country for those who believe in the Labour Movement.

(LEWIS *makes a gesture of impatience.* GWEN *is watching him with growing anxiety.*)

SAM : Cost yer a bit ter git there, Dai !

DAI : Oh no ! I'm going to work my passage. D'you remember, Lewis ? I told you—a cattle-boat. There's three or four of us going.

LEWIS : Oh yes ! Yes ! Yes ! (*Trying to suppress his eagerness.*) You said—didn't you—I think you said there'd be plenty of room ?

(GWEN, *grasping the arm of the chair, half rises, whispering 'Lewis !' in a startled tone.*)

DAI (*not seeing* GWEN'S *movement*) : There's more now than ever. Two that I know have backed out, now that it's time to go. I thought they would.

TWM (*trying to be casual*) : By the way, Lewis, now that we're talking, how about that new district in Carmarthenshire ? (LEWIS *looks puzzled.*) You remember Dai telling you ?

LEWIS : Carmarthenshire ? Oh yes ! Yes ! And about Pinkerton ? Oh yes, of course !

GWEN : Were you thinking, Lewis, of going to work in Carmarthenshire ?

DAI : It's a good job, Mrs. Price—agent for a district that's bound to grow. Pinkerton got them to postpone the appointment.

GWEN : Well, I won't try to stand in your light, Lewis. I don't so much mind since it's Shir Gâr—if you've made up your mind to go. There's a lot of your father's people down there. (*Forgetting what she was going to say, she falls into thought. Then she sighs, and quietly brushes her hand over her eyes.*)

TWM : I suppose, now, Lewis, there's no doubt you'll take it ?

LEWIS (*looking at* TWM *with a queer smile*) : No, I won't take it, Twm.

DAI (*in surprise*) : What ? Won't take it ? Didn't you always say—

TWM (*his eagerness breaking through*) : No ? You're sure ? Then you might, p'raps you'll put in a word for me, Lewis ? You know how much I've done for the cause—

DAI : But think, Lewis, think—

LEWIS : I don't want to think. I'm sick of thinking. I want to forget !

SAM : Wot's up, old feller ? Forgit wot ?

LEWIS (*with a look of unspeakable pain, as he points towards the crossing*) : That—down there !

GWEN (*rising to her feet*) : Lewis, 'nghariad-i !

DAI : But, Lewis bach, it wasn't your fault—

LEWIS (*imploringly*) : No ! No ! It wasn't my fault ! It wasn't my fault, was it, Dai ? It wasn't my fault, was it, Sam ?

SAM : O' course not ! Wot puts sich an idear into yer 'ead ?

LEWIS (*muttering to himself*) : No, it wasn't my fault ! It wasn't my fault !

TWM : You mustn't think of it like that—

LEWIS : Not think of it ? I tell you it's with me day and night, and night and day. I shall never have peace and simple sleep again ! If I shut my eyes now, I can see it before me—

GWEN : Lewis ! Lewis !

LEWIS : I can see it before me, I tell you—all, all, all ! The crowd about the gates—the faces moving to and fro—the sun shining on the rails—the soldiers—there they are in two brown lines, and there's one with blood running down his face. And there are sounds that keep coming into my mind—the shouting, and the rushing, and women shrieking—I don't know where. It's all so clear, so horribly clear. And then—I heard Gwilym calling to me. He tried to pull me away. They fired—and there he was at my feet, dead—my brother, Gwilym—dead !

(*There is a long pause.* LEWIS *covers his eyes with his hands.* GWEN *is heard crying to herself.*)

DAI : Aay, Lewis, it was a terrible thing to happen. But, Lewis, as true as I'm sitting here, I see no blame on you.

LEWIS : No ! I didn't know, Dai, did I ? It wasn't my fault. Nobody can say it was my fault. How could I tell what was going to happen ? I'd have seen the strike in Hell and all Aberpandy with it, before harm should come to a hair of his head.

TWM : All you did was what you thought best for the cause.

LEWIS (*looking away*) : Ah ! There ! I wonder ! I wonder !

DAI : Come, Lewis, come ! You were the most sincere of us all !

LEWIS : Yes. I was honest enough in my way. But I had ambition—I wanted power. All my life, I'd wanted that—power, power ! I was poor ; but there was something always whispering to me, driving me on and on. It sent me to the night-school ; it sent me to books ; it sent me to politics ; and —(*pointing towards the crossing.*)—it sent me there !

TWM : Dewch, mun, dewch ! Look here now, never mind about me. You take that job in Carmarthenshire.

LEWIS : It's no use. I've lost all heart. D'you know what's the matter with me, Twm ? I'm a haunted man. Sleeping and waking, I'm a haunted man. There's a ghost in Aberpandy that will not let me rest. It's looking at me always with his kind, kind eyes. And I am afraid. D'you want to know why I haven't gone back to work ? Because I'm afraid—afraid of his voice in the echoes, afraid of his face down there in the dark, with the shadows moving across the coal. I'm a beaten man ! I'm a beaten man ! And all I'm asking now is the place where I can forget !

(*Enter* PRICE *in his working clothes, with 'jack' and 'box,' and the dust of the pit upon him. Seeing the visitors, he halts a moment, and his manner grows stiff and frigid.*)

DAI : Dydd da 'chi, Mr. Price.

PRICE (*abrubtly*) : How d'you do ?

TWM : Nice day again !

(GWEN *rises as if to give the arm-chair to* PRICE.)

PRICE (*kindly*) : No, no ! Sit down, you.

(*He crosses in front of table, and takes the chair by parlour door, facing the visitors.*)

DAI : So you've started too, Mr. Price ?

GWEN (*towards back-kitchen*) : Put the water for your uncle to wash, Lizzie Ann.

LIZZIE ANN (*without*) : All right !

PRICE : Aay, I've started. (*With a glance towards* LEWIS.) Started first day, and glad of the chance, too, after being out all these months, for nothing.

TWM : Well, it's true we didn't get our terms this time—

PRICE : There were men here told you that you wouldn't, too !

TWM : But we'll get them in the end, don't you fear. The trouble isn't ended yet.

PRICE : Aay ! That's the kind of talk I hear them using coming down Bryndu. A man would think, after all we've been through, even the youngsters had had enough for a bit, whatever. But I suppose it's no use trying to make them see reason.

SAM : No, boss. Not a bit ! It's always struck me as peculiar that a man don't develop commonsense till 'e's pawst the taime when it would come in useful.

TWM : Well, I'll say this, anyhow—we'd be in a better position to-day, all of us, if we'd stuck together, old men and young.

SAM : I've noticed, 'ahever, that when one lot o' men awsks another lot o' men ter stick tergether, it generally means follerin' the partickler views of them wot awsks.

PRICE : You've put that fellow Pinkerton into Parliament. I don't know what more you want.

DAI : I'm not sure it's putting men in Parliament that's going to save the working classes.

PRICE : Not men like Pinkerton.

TWM : We've got to work till we've organised

the unions so well that we can call out every worker in the country at a day's notice. 'Direct Action' —that's what's got to come, and that won't come till we've got solidarity in Labour.

PRICE : Talk ! All talk ! Wait till you're over sixty, and then you'll see.

DAI : See what ?

SAM : Yer'll see another pack of youngsters torkin' of things you don't understand, and maikin' 'ell's delaite of wot you set most store by. Yer'll see yerselves comin' dahn on 'em laike a thahsand o' bricks. And yer'll all be the saime bloomin' fools as yer fawthers before yer.

DAI : Wait, Sam. There's such a thing as progress.

SAM (*with a circular movement of his hand*) : Rahnd and rahnd, that's 'ow things go. I'm gettin' on in years. I know—rahnd and rahnd !

DAI : Yes. But, Sam, what if the centre is moving on ?

PRICE : It's no use talking, Sam. I talked enough to Lewis.

LEWIS (*grimly*) : That's true enough, anyhow. (*To* SAM, *reflectively.*)—I wonder, Sam, if you're right !

SAM : Don't wonder, me boy. I've bin abaht the world. I know.

LEWIS (*To* TWM *and* DAI) : They may say what they like. If the strike was to go on, we had to stop the blacklegs coming in.

TWM : Yes. That's where they beat us. Nobody had the heart to tackle them again after—after—

PRICE (*grimly and quietly*) : After Gwilym was killed. Oh aay ! You thought you'd arranged it all very fine. But I've lived in the world for more than sixty years, and I've never seen good come out of anything that was in the hands of unbelievers.

LEWIS (*with irritation*) : Oh, don't begin all that again !

GWEN : Nawr, John. It's time to wash.

PRICE : No. It doesn't do, when the evil has happened, to mention the cause.

LEWIS (*with gathering anger*) : I tell you I can't stand such talk ! We didn't know what was going to happen. It wasn't my fault ! I acted for the best !

PRICE : A man who has acted for the best ought to have a clean conscience.

LEWIS (*startled*) : A clean conscience ? What d'you mean ? (*Defiantly.*)—What do you mean ?

PRICE : There oughtn't to be any need for him to blind himself with drink.

GWEN (*rising*) : Nawr, John, nawr !

LEWIS (*advancing a step angrily*) : There's nothing on my conscience. It wasn't my fault ! It wasn't my fault !

PRICE (*rising*) : You can't work. You can't sleep. You know !

LEWIS : Be careful ! Be careful, I tell you ! Don't drive me too far !

GWEN (*moving to get between them*) : John ! Lewis !

PRICE (*stopping her with a single gesture*) : Taw sôn, Gwen. (*To* LEWIS.)—God is not mocked.

LEWIS (*hotly*) : You're down on me. You've always been down on me. I followed the truth as I saw it. I took my stand openly. I haven't lied to myself, or covered things up with cant. If the men listened to me more than to you, I couldn't help it. You've been jealous of me. All along you've been jealous—you and Isaac Pugh, and all the lot of you !

PRICE : You set yourself up against the Almighty in the blindness of your pride, and you wouldn't listen when I warned you.

LEWIS : Humbug ! All humbug ! You were jealous !

PRICE : You had to learn your lesson, like many more before you. He's there, and He's watching. He's put a judgment upon you. (LEWIS *shrinks a little.*) Yes, He's put a judgment upon you, and it's the brand of Cain !

(*Groaning out ' O Uffern ! ' through his clenched teeth,* LEWIS *raises his fist to strike his father.* GWEN *shrieks. There is a general movement in the room. The old man does not quail, but meets* LEWIS *squarely, eye to eye. Suddenly,* LEWIS'S *anger collapses, and his hand drops to his side. The look of haunting and of anguish comes over his face. He staggers back, and supports himself against the table.*)

LEWIS (*in a low broken voice*) : Yes, it's true—the brand of Cain ! The brand of Cain ! I've felt it down in my heart—all the time. All the men and women in the street—I'm wondering if they're saying, ' There he is, the man who killed his brother.' All these weeks I've been waiting to hear somebody say it—five

long weeks—waiting to hear somebody say it ; and now—it's said !

GWEN : Don't you mind him, machan-i. He's a hard, hard man—

DAI (*turning towards the door*) : I think we'd better be going.

(TWM *and* SAM *go out.* LEWIS *rushes to* DAI, *and grips his arm.*)

LEWIS : No, Dai, I want you. (*To* GWEN.)—Mam, I'm going away, far away.

GWEN : Going away ? No, no, no !

LEWIS (*looking at his father*) : You heard what he said, mam—' the brand of Cain ' ! His face has been saying it all the time! His face will say it for ever. If I stay here, sooner or later, it will make me kill him.

PRICE (*going towards the kitchen*) : I'm not afraid. (*He goes out.*)

GWEN : You mustn't leave me, Lewis. You mustn't leave me, too. There's John Henry gone away, and Gwilym in his grave for ever. What shall I do ? What shall I do, if I haven't got one left, and old age coming heavy upon me ?

LEWIS : There's no help for it, mam. (*To* DAI.) —Dai, I'm coming with you to-morrow.

DAI : Don't be impulsive, Lewis. Think it over. (*He goes out.*)

GWEN : Don't be hard on me, Lewis. Don't be hard. Think what it will be for me in this old house, one year after another.

LEWIS : It's too late ! Too late ! I'm going where there are no hills to keep a man thinking always, and perhaps some day—I'll forget. (*Moving towards the door.*)—I want peace ! Peace ! (*He goes out.*)

(GWEN *throws herself into the arm-chair, rocking herself to and fro disconsolately.*)

GWEN : Not one, after all ! O Dduw, not even one ? Dim un ! Dim un !

Curtain.

THE END.

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